

# Making a Manuscript, Making a Cult

## *Scribal Production of the Syriac Life of Symeon the Stylite in Late Antiquity*

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For scholars of the ancient and early medieval world, accidents of survival obscure the early history of the vast majority of texts. In most cases, the oldest manuscripts of classical and late antique Greek and Latin texts date to the ninth or tenth centuries.<sup>1</sup> The temporal gap between the creation of a text and its surviving

manuscripts poses difficulties for those seeking to identify the version of the text closest to the original, thus precipitating the painstaking work of textual criticism. It also distances scholars from the individuals and communities who first copied and used ancient texts. Yet, in a highly unusual case, three early manuscripts of the Syriac *Life of Symeon* survive into the present day, providing a concrete example of a text that circulated in drastically different versions within the first hundred years following its creation.<sup>2</sup> The earliest, dating to 473, is currently housed at the Vatican Apostolic Library: Vaticanus Syriacus 160, fols. 1v–79v (V).<sup>3</sup> Two

### Abbreviations for manuscripts:

- V = Vaticanus Syriacus 160, fols. 1v–79v (473 CE).
- B<sub>1</sub> = British Library Add. 14484, fols. 48v–133v (6th century).
- B<sub>2</sub> = British Library Add. 14484, fols. 134r–152v (6th century).
- G = Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai Georgian 6, fols. 12r–66v (983 CE).

### Abbreviations for major transcriptions and translations:

- As. = S. E. Assemani, ed. and trans., *Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa, adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae*, vol. 2 (Rome, 1748).
- Bj. = P. Bedjan, ed., *Acta martyrum et sanctorum*, vol. 4 (Paris, 1890–97).
- Doran = R. Doran, trans., *The Lives of Simeon Stylites*, Cistercian Studies 112 (Kalamazoo, MI, 1992).
- Gar. = G. Garitte, trans., *Vies géorgiennes de S. Syméon Stylite l'Ancien et de S. Éphrem*, vol. 2, CSCO 172, Iber. 8 (Louvain, 1957).
- Lent = F. Lent, “The Life of St. Simeon Stylites: A Translation of the Syriac Text in Bedjan’s *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, Vol. IV,” *JAOS* 35 (1915): 103–98.

1 As P. Mass states succinctly, “We have no autograph manuscripts of the Greek and Roman classical writers and no copies which have been collated with the originals; the manuscripts we possess derive from the originals through an unknown number of intermediate copies, and are consequently of questionable trustworthiness” (*Textual Criticism*, trans. B. Flower [Oxford, 1958], 1).

2 Collectors acquired all three manuscripts from Dayr al-Suryān (the Monastery of the Syrians), located between Alexandria and Cairo, Egypt. Dayr al-Suryān is responsible for preserving over 100 Syriac manuscripts dated prior to the year 1000 (S. Brock, “Without Mushê of Nisibis, Where Would We Be? Some Reflections on the Transmission of Syriac Literature,” *JECrSt* 56.1–4 [2004]: 18). For a recent checklist of dated Syriac manuscripts, see S. Brock, “A Tentative Checklist of Dated Syriac Manuscripts up to 1300,” *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 15.1 (2012): 21–48. J. S. Assemani acquired V during his visit to the monastery in 1715 (Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 3 vols. [Rome, 1719], 1:606). Henry Tattam acquired B<sub>1</sub> and B<sub>2</sub>; they entered the British Museum’s collection in 1843 (W. Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum, Acquired since the Year 1838*, 3 vols. [London, 1870–72], 3:xiii).

3 For catalogue entries, see Assemani, *BO*, 1:235–55, 1:606; S. E. Assemani and J. S. Assemani, *Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticanae codicum manuscriptorum catalogus: Partis primae, tomus tertius, complectens reliquos codices chaldaicos sive syriacos* (Rome, 1759), 319. S. E. Assemani transcribed this manuscript and provided a loose Latin translation (As., 268–398). Doran translated the text into English.

sixth-century manuscripts are now housed in the British Library: British Library Add. 14484, folios 48v–133v (B<sub>1</sub>),<sup>4</sup> and British Library Add. 14484, folios 134r–152v (B<sub>2</sub>).<sup>5</sup> Nineteenth-century curators bound together the two British Library manuscripts in the same volume (Add. 14484), but they were produced separately.<sup>6</sup> These

His publication includes an appendix that coordinates his chapter numbers with V, Assemani's transcription, and Bedjan's transcription of B<sub>1</sub> (see note 4; Doran, 103–98, 201–5). Digital photos of this manuscript are now freely available online through the website of the Vatican Apostolic Library. Following its acquisition by the Vatican Apostolic Library, Vaticanus Syriacus 160, fols. 1v–79v (which contains the Syriac *Life of Symeon*), was bound with at least two additional manuscripts that contain lives of martyrs (fols. 80v–240v). These manuscripts were written in separate hands and were not produced in association with fols. 1v–79v. In the following pages, I refer only to fols. 1v–79v when I discuss V. Because Assemani's and Bedjan's transcriptions often contain errors and points of imprecision, I provide direct reference to manuscripts and their transcriptions plus translations when I cite the Syriac *Life of Symeon*, usually referring to the page rather than the chapter number, since the various versions of the Syriac *Life* present different orders and therefore different chapter enumerations. Regarding manuscript transcriptions and, more specifically, orthographic devices, I use the *linea occultans*, *syāmē*, and homograph dots. I limit my use of homograph dots to select verbs (a dot below perfect pe'al verbs and a dot above active pe'al participles), select pronouns, the feminine singular possessive suffix, and a few additional homographs; the dotting systems in the manuscripts (particularly V) are idiosyncratic. I reproduce punctuation as found in the manuscripts. I retain spellings found in the manuscript even if that spelling does not accord with what becomes standard in later Syriac.

4 For the catalogue entry, see Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 3:1152. Bedjan transcribed the manuscript, with reference to Assemani's transcription of V and British Library Add. 12174, fols. 18v–47v, which dates to 1197 (Bj., 507–644). H. Lietzmann and H. Hilgenfeld published a German translation of Bedjan's transcription in *Das Leben des heiligen Symeon Stylites*, TU 32.4 (Leipzig, 1908), 80–180. Lent published an English translation (Lent, 111–98).

5 For the catalogue entry, see Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 3:1152–53. P. Peeters also provides a useful description of the manuscript in *Orient et Byzance: Le trésor oriental de l'hagiographie byzantine*, SubsHag 26 (Brussels, 1950), 115. This manuscript has not been transcribed or translated. It has been badly damaged and only a portion of the original text survives. However, the surviving portions of B<sub>2</sub> correspond closely with G, which dates to 983. For missing sections of B<sub>2</sub>, I refer to Garitte's Latin translation of this manuscript (Gar., 1–53). Adam Bremer-McCollum confirmed for me the precision of the Latin translation of the Georgian. I thank him for sharing his assessment with me.

6 A total of five manuscripts were bound together as Add. 14484 following their acquisition by the British Museum in 1843. Two pieces of evidence indicate that the two manuscripts of the Syriac

three manuscripts offer insight into the close association between the transmission of a hagiography and the cult of saints in late antiquity.

The Syriac *Life of Symeon* recounts the activities of the famous holy man and first column-stander, Symeon the Stylite the Elder (d. 459 CE).<sup>7</sup> All three late antique versions share a core of unified material. They begin with Symeon's early life in Cilicia, time in the Teleda monastery, and arrival in Telanissos.<sup>8</sup> They end with an explanation of Symeon's ascent to the column and death.<sup>9</sup> These two narrative sections bookend a sizable compilation of miracle accounts, descriptions of Symeon's visions, and reports of his ascetic practices.

Although the three late antique recensions retain this basic structure, each recension presents diverging accounts of events, a unique order, and singular descriptions of the saint.<sup>10</sup> Previous scholars addressed

*Life of Symeon the Stylite* currently bound in Add. 14484 were produced separately. First, the two manuscripts display unique hands. Second, the leaves of the folios in the two manuscripts differ in size (B<sub>1</sub>: 10½ inches by 8¾ inches; B<sub>2</sub>: 10¾ inches by 8 inches). See Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 1:98–100, 3:1152–53, 3:1224.

7 In addition to the Syriac *Life of Symeon* in its various recensions, two other lives of Symeon survive from late antiquity: ch. 26 of Theodoret's *History of the Monks of Syria* and Antonius's *Life of Symeon*. The critical edition of Theodoret's *History of the Monks of Syria* can be found in P. Canivet and A. Leroy-Molinghen, eds., *Histoire des moines de Syrie: "Histoire Philothée"*, 2 vols., SC 234, 257 (Paris, 1977–79), and an English translation in R. M. Price, *A History of the Monks of Syria*, Cistercian Studies 88 (Kalamazoo, MI, 1985). A preliminary critical edition of Antonius's *Life of Symeon* is found in Lietzmann and Hilgenfeld, *Das Leben des heiligen Symeon Stylites*, 20–78, and a translation in Doran, 85–100, 225–29. The Syriac *Life* is the second oldest of the three lives, but the only one written in association with the cult site.

8 V, fol. 1v, col. 1, ln. 1–fol. 12r, col. 2, ln. 23; As., 268.1–287.2; Doran, 103–18 (chs. 1–27). B<sub>2</sub>, fol. 134r, col. 1, ln. 1–fol. 141v, col. 1, ln. 22; Gar., 1.1–11.7 (chs. 1–24). The section of B<sub>2</sub> is only partially preserved. B<sub>1</sub>, fol. 48v, col. 1, ln. 1–fol. 61v, col. 1, ln. 11; Bj., 507.14–527.7; Lent, 111–24. For toponyms in Syria, I follow K.-P. Todt and B. A. Vest, *Syria (Syria Prôtē, Syria Deutera, Syria Euphratēsia)*, 3 vols., Denkwien 438, TIB 15 (Vienna, 2014).

9 V, fol. 63r, col. 2, ln. 27–fol. 77r, col. 2, ln. 23; As., 369.22–394.21; Doran, 175–94 (chs. 107–29). The surviving fragments of B<sub>2</sub> do not preserve the end portion of the narrative; see instead Gar., 49.4–53.22 (chs. 103–23). B<sub>1</sub>, fol. 114v, col. 1, ln. 25–fol. 130v, col. 1, ln. 4; Bj., 616.3–644.13; Lent, 180–98.

10 Eight Syriac manuscripts preserve the text partially or in full: V; B<sub>1</sub>; B<sub>2</sub>; British Library Add. 12174, fols. 18v–47v (1197 CE); Damascus Pat. 12/17, fols. 52v–71v (twelfth century); British Library Add. 14732, fols. 215r–215v (thirteenth century); Syrian Orthodox

this problem by attempting to establish which manuscript transmits the version closest to the original. The attempt to establish the earliest version of the text is of great importance for scholars seeking to reconstruct historical events or analyze the literary character of the text at its time of composition. Because scholars focused almost exclusively on V and B<sub>1</sub>, this debate has been inconclusive for many years. Some scholars advocated for the primacy of V based on the date given in the manuscript (473) and paleographical evidence, while others preferred B<sub>1</sub> because of its literary elegance.<sup>11</sup> I contributed to this debate by undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the Syriac manuscript tradition: I concluded not only that V is the earliest version of the text but that it may be the autograph.<sup>12</sup>

At the same time, the existence of three early manuscripts offers a second investigative possibility. Recent research by New Testament textual critics has emphasized that certain texts developed rapidly and with such variation that for most of their ancient readers they did not exist in a single, original form. Rather, individual manuscripts represent stages within a text's growth and

production.<sup>13</sup> Scholars of "New Philology" in medieval studies underscore the need to look at a manuscript as the product of various historical actors, including patrons, authors, scribes, illuminators, and commentators.<sup>14</sup> For these scholars, the boundary between author and scribe is fluid. As Bernard Cerquiglini states,

That instability of medieval works in the vernacular is a clear illustration of what is particular to both the written manuscript and, more generally, scribal culture. . . . The work copied by hand, manipulated, always open and as good as unfinished, invited intervention, annotation, and commentary. Confronted with an earlier piece of writing, it constructed itself and sustained itself simply with the distance it assumed in relation to the utterance that was its basis. The scribal work was commentary, paraphrase, supplementary meaning, supplementary language, brought to bear upon a letter that was essentially unfinished.<sup>15</sup>

The production of a manuscript was an interpretive and historically specific act, ensuring the perpetuation of select literary material and reshaping it, whether in physical or in literary form, for future readers.<sup>16</sup>

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Church, Archdiocese of Aleppo 61(m), fols. 107v–127r (1642–58 CE); and Church of the Forty Martyrs, Mardin 271, fols. 123v–208v (pp. 250–420) (20th century). Multiple translations of the Syriac *Life of Symeon* are preserved in Arabic and Georgian manuscripts. Most of the translations have not been systematically studied, with the exception of G.

11 Torrey, Lietzmann and Hilgenfeld, and Lent preferred the version of the text recorded in B<sub>1</sub>, because of its polish; see C. C. Torrey, "The Letters of Simeon the Stylite," *JAOS* 20 (1899): 274–76; Lietzmann and Hilgenfeld, *Das Leben des heiligen Symeon Stylites*, 211–14; Lent, 104–11. Nöldeke and Peeters favored the version preserved in V, because of the manuscript's age; see T. Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar*, trans. J. A. Crichton (London, 1904), xiii; Peeters, *Orient et Byzance*, 112–18. Although Doran makes a case for the importance of the version preserved in the Vatican manuscript, he argues that the texts preserved in both B<sub>1</sub> and V are later recensions and it is impossible to reconstruct the urtext of the life (Doran, 45–51). With the exception of Peeters, none of these scholars note the existence of B<sub>2</sub>.

12 My dissertation gives an analysis of seven of the eight Syriac manuscripts as well as a brief discussion of the Georgian and Arabic manuscripts. I also argue in an article that V is the autograph of the text, using both codicological and epigraphic evidence; see D. Boero, "Symeon and the Making of the Stylite: The Construction of Sanctity in Late Antique Syria" (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2015), 137–211, and "The Context of Production of the Vatican Manuscript of the Syriac *Life of Symeon the Stylite*," *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 18.2 (2015): 319–59.

13 For an overview of this approach in New Testament studies, see E. J. Epp, "The Multivalence of the Term 'Original Text' in New Testament Textual Criticism," *HTR* 92.3 (1999): 245–81. D. C. Parker proposes that the gospels are living texts, with their multiplicity of recensions testifying to the interpretive process of preserving Jesus's teachings in both the ancient and modern world; see *The Living Text of the Gospels* (Cambridge, 1997). B. D. Ehrman and K. Haines-Eitzen explore how, by altering the text on the page, scribes transformed the gospels that they transmitted and consequently exerted authority over future individuals and communities who read them; see Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (New York, 1993), and Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters: Literacy, Power, and the Transmitters of Early Christian Literature* (Oxford, 2000). Scholars of ancient Jewish texts and pseudepigrapha have employed similar approaches.

14 The method gained prominence with the publication of *The New Philology*, a special issue of *Speculum* (65.1 [1990]), and of B. Cerquiglini's *Éloge de la variante: Histoire critique de la philologie* (Paris, 1989).

15 B. Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant: A Critical History of Philology*, trans. B. Wing (Baltimore, 1999), 34.

16 Scholars of Syriac have also made a substantial contribution to the study of manuscripts and reading culture in the late antique









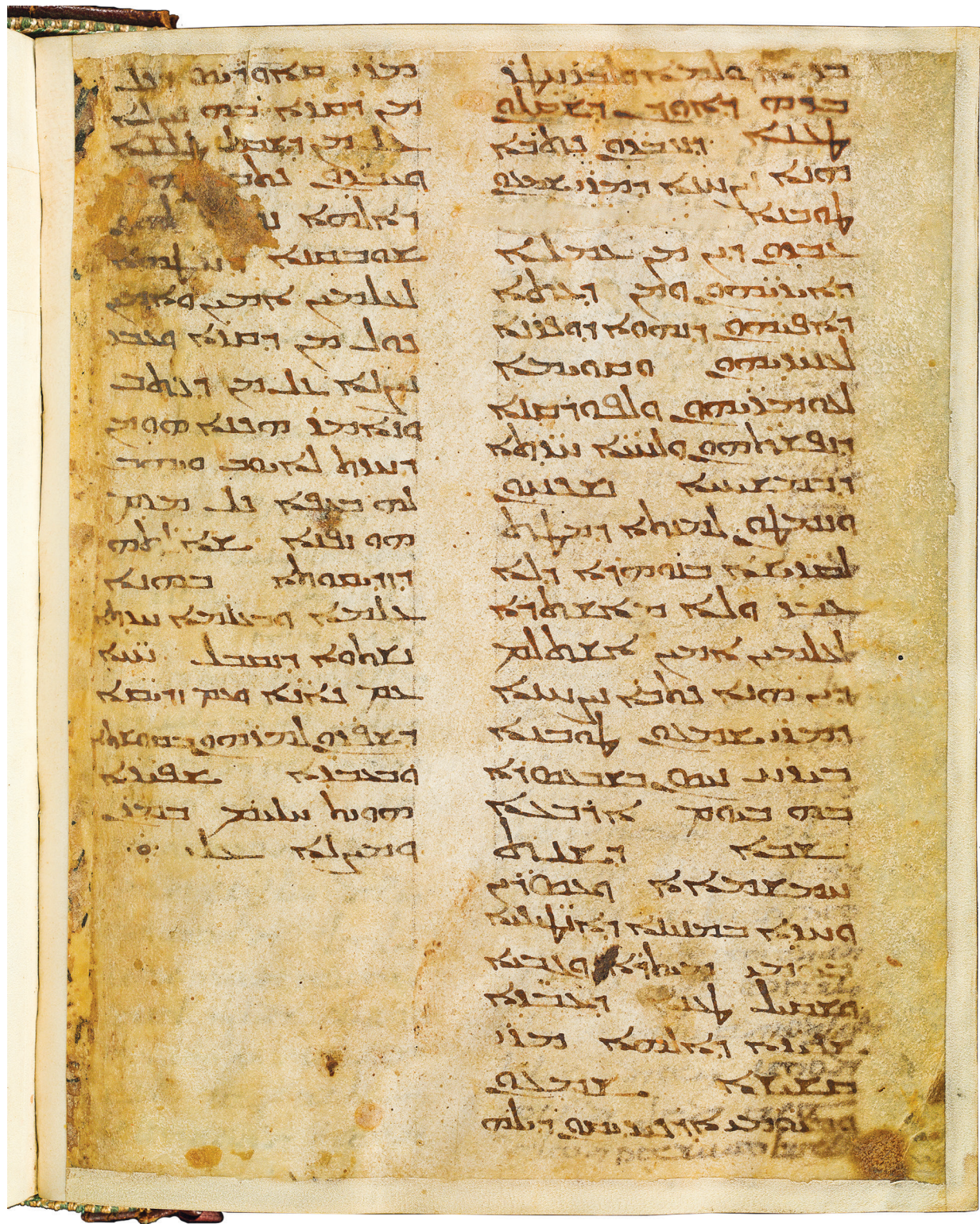


Fig. 1. Vaticanus Syriacus 160, fol. 79v. © 2018 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. Reproduced with permission of Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.



the authors of this text and V as the autograph, although I acknowledge that this manuscript may be a copy of an earlier manuscript.

Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar do not explicitly state the place where they composed their text or the individuals who paid for its production, but, as I have argued in previous scholarship, details provided in the colophon in combination with epigraphic evidence make it possible to locate composition in Telanissos (Tell-Neššē in Syriac, Dayr Sim‘ān in Arabic), the village adjacent to Symeon’s cult site, and potentially identify the manuscript’s patrons (fig. 2).<sup>27</sup> In addition to naming the authors, the colophon states that the text was completed in the time of the priest Mar Symeon and his archdeacon Mar Kyrus. Inscriptions associated with a hostel in Telanissos also mention an individual named Symeon. Placed at the beginning of the processional route leading up to the cult site, this hostel was the first major infrastructural project in Telanissos to support pilgrims’ travel. For the sake of brevity, I reproduce only one of the four inscriptions associated with this building:<sup>28</sup>

ΧΜΓ ΕΓΕΝ ΤΟΥΤΟ ΤΟ ΠΑΝΔ ΕΝ Μ  
Πανημω ινδς β του ζκφ ετους Χε βοηθι  
Συμεωνης  
του Μα  
ριμης  
εποιη  
σεν μνησ  
θ + η<sup>29</sup>

The inscription states, “Ch(rist) b(orn) (of) M(ary). This inn was (built) in (the) month of Panemos, indication 2, of the 527th year. O Christ, help (us)! Symeon of Marimēs built it: may he be remembered!”<sup>30</sup> The year 527 in the Antiochene calendar corresponds to 479 CE.

27 Boero, “The Context of Production,” 319–59.

28 For other inscriptions, see *IGLSyr* 2:233–34, nos. 417, 418; G. Tchalenko, *Villages antiques de la Syrie du Nord: Le Massif du Bélus à l’époque romaine*, 3 vols., Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 50 (Paris, 1953–58), 1:206–9, 2: pl. cxliv, lxviii, no. 16; 3:19, no. 16.

29 *IGLSyr* 2:233, no. 416.

30 Translation adapted from W. K. Prentice, *Greek and Latin Inscriptions*, Publications of an American Archaeological Expedition to Syria, 1899–1900, vol. 3 (New York, 1908), 135, no. 121. “Marimēs” may refer to Mariamnē, located about 40 kilometers southwest of Ḥamā, or, more likely, Marimīn on Ḡabal az-Zāwiya (Todt and Vest,

The time frame of Symeon’s construction of the hostel (471 to 479) thus overlaps perfectly with the completion of this version of the Syriac *Life*. Although there must have been several individuals named Symeon in fifth-century Telanissos, it is plausible that the Symeon in the inscriptions and the priest Mar Symeon were the same man. A priest would have been in an excellent position to gather and oversee funds for such a building project.<sup>31</sup>

An inscription from Telanissos also identifies a certain Kyrus:

+ ΕΚΤΕΣΗΝ ΚΥΡΟΣ ..... ΜΝΩ  
Συμεω .....  
νης ..... ΜΟΣ<sup>32</sup>

The fragmentary inscription reads, “Kyrus built . . . Symeon . . .”<sup>33</sup> In north Syrian inscriptions the verb ἔκτισεν regularly indicates patronage or oversight of a building project.<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately, W. H. Waddington, who first recorded the inscription in the mid-nineteenth century, did not give sufficient details regarding the inscription’s archaeological context.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, it is clear that Kyrus was responsible for the construction of the building upon which the inscription was originally carved. The inscription also associates Kyrus’s building activities with an individual named Symeon. This individual could be the priest Symeon or it could be the saint himself. Either interpretation might link the Kyrus named in this inscription with the Kyrus named in V’s colophon.

*Syria*, 2:1502–4). For additional commentary on the inscription, see Boero, “The Context of Production,” 337–40.

31 Boero, “The Context of Production,” 339–45.

32 *IGLSyr* 2:236, no. 423.

33 Translation adapted from Prentice, *Greek and Latin Inscriptions*, 137, no. 123.

34 Boero, “The Context of Production,” 345–46, 346n78.

35 Waddington remarks that the inscription was carved upon the lintel of a door, but gives no further discussion of the building’s function or location. Prentice, like L. Jalabert and R. Mousterde in vol. 2 of *IGLSyr*, simply repeats Waddington’s description; it is not clear that they saw the inscription during their surveys of Telanissos. See P. Le Bas and W. H. Waddington, *Voyage archéologique en Grèce et en Asie Mineure, fait par ordre du gouvernement français pendant les années 1843 et 1844*, vol. 3.1 (Paris, 1870), 624, no. 2693; Prentice, *Greek and Latin Inscriptions*, 137, no. 123; *IGLSyr* 2:236, no. 423. See also commentary in Boero, “The Context of Production,” 345–47.

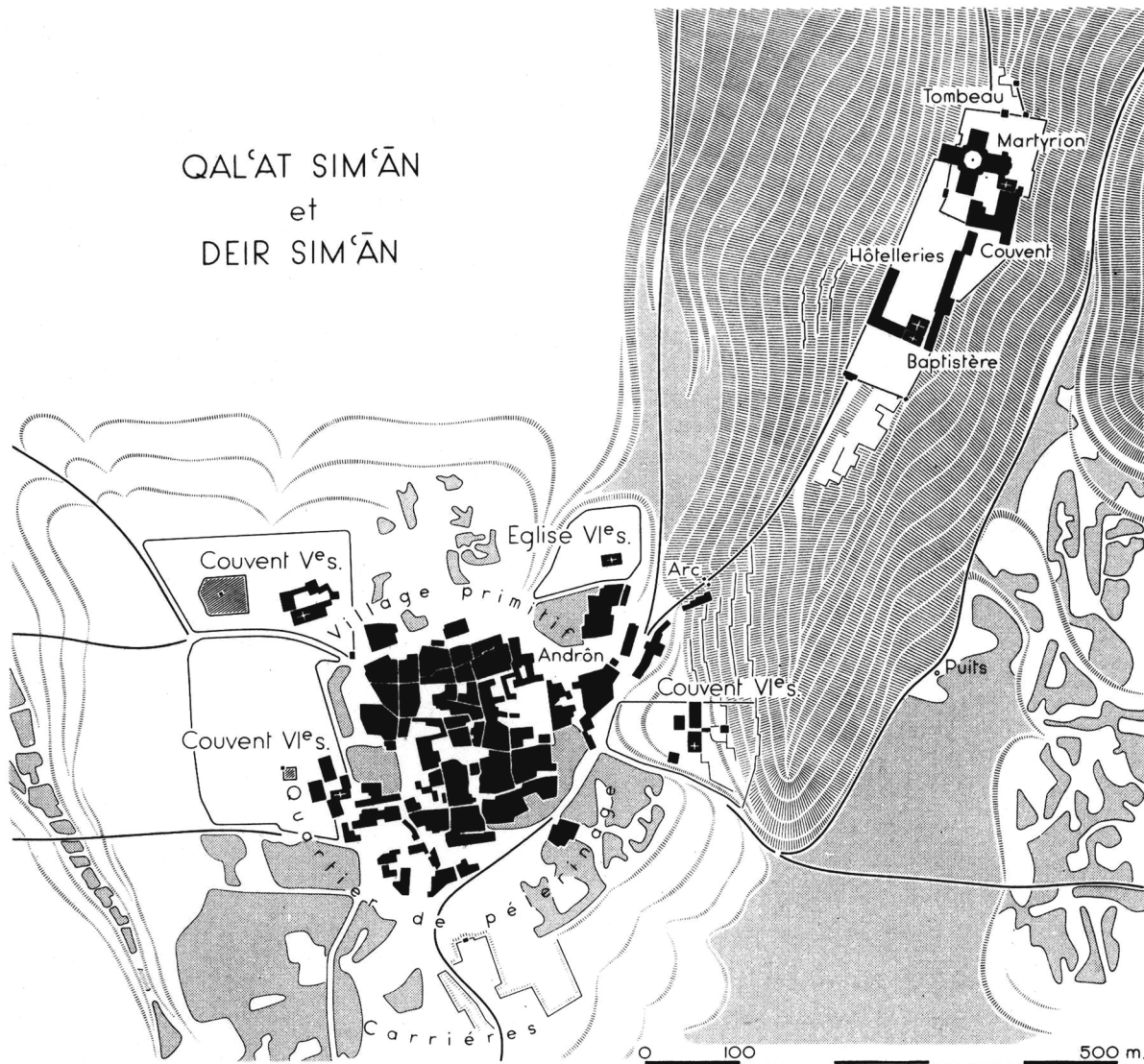


Fig. 2. Plan of the village of Telanissos (Dayr Sim'ān) and cult site (Qal'at Sim'ān) by G. Tchalenko. The hostel in Telanissos is labeled, "Andrôn." Reproduced with permission of P. Geuthner.

The evidence paints a compelling picture of local activities to support cult life in Telanissos in the late fifth century. A certain Symeon and a certain Kyrus were involved in building projects, either in association with each other or both in devotion to the saint. A certain Symeon and Kyrus were also involved with the production of V's version of the *Syriac Life*. Given the chronological overlap between the construction of the hostel and the completion of the text, it is probable that the individuals named in the inscriptions are the same as those named in the colophon. Indeed, the various

expenditures—the production of a manuscript, the construction of the hostel, and perhaps additional local construction—point to a sustained project on the part of the local community to promote and maintain pilgrimage to Telanissos. Whereas the hostel supported pilgrims who visited Symeon's site in Telanissos, the *Syriac Life* made available the local community's version of the saint's story.<sup>36</sup> Owing to the fragmentary and limited nature of the epigraphic evidence, we cannot link the Symeon and

36 Boero, "The Context of Production," 348–50.



Kyrus of the inscriptions with the two individuals in the text with complete certainty, but in my view the signs of the connection between the hostel and the text provide a credible context for the contents of V.

The Vatican manuscript is an outstanding historical document, not only because of its early date and potential close links with Telanissos but also because it plausibly is the autograph of the text. Only a handful of autographs survive from the ancient world. Two Syriac manuscripts from late antiquity bear a close association with their autographs: British Library Add. 14534 and 17126, which contain a commentary by Philoxenos of Hierapolis (Mabbūg in Syriac) on the prologue of John and fragments of his commentaries on Matthew and Luke. It is probable that scribes from Philoxenos's scriptorium produced both manuscripts, as suggested by the scribal hand and the colophon in Add. 17126.<sup>37</sup> Papyri also provide about twenty examples of autographs or fragments of autographs, all otherwise unknown in the literary record. Their identification as autographs is based on the nature of their corrections and annotations.<sup>38</sup> Most important among the papyrological finds is the personal archive of Dioskoros, a

leading man of sixth-century Aphrodito (modern Kōm Ishqāw, Egypt), which is composed of public and private documents, such as petitions, depositions, receipts, inventories, and letters, as well as drafts of his poetry. Because the archive contains numerous documents by Dioskoros, scholars are confident that the poems are in fact his own autographs.<sup>39</sup>

Unlike papyrological examples of autographs, which often display corrections and work-in-progress drafts, V does not exhibit extensive annotations.<sup>40</sup> Consequently, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar may have completed a rough draft at an earlier phase of their work, this manuscript may be one of several copies sent out by the authors, or it may be a closely related copy of Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar's original text, as discussed above. In any case, it is clear that Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar made use of a set of earlier sources, which they organized to form a cohesive narrative of Symeon's life. The two authors gathered oral testimony from Symeon's contemporaries. They also consulted written documents preserved at the cult site or elsewhere in the village, such as letters, a short apologia in circulation about the saint, and possibly short miracle collections.<sup>41</sup> This interpretive process

37 Philoxenos originally composed these commentaries in 505 CE. The colophon of Add. 17126 specifies that the manuscript dates to 511 and was composed in Hierapolis (Mabbūg in Syriac). Add. 14534 lacks a colophon detailing its date or place of production but displays a hand similar to that of Add. 17126. See Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum* (n. 2 above), 2:526–27; D. A. Michelson, *The Practical Christology of Philoxenos of Mabbug* (Oxford, 2015), 115–19. Another important Syriac manuscript on this front is Vaticanus Syriacus 162, which contains the *Chronicle of Zuqnīn* and dates to 775–76. A. Harrak has convincingly argued that Joshua the Stylite was both the copyist-compiler of the first three parts of the chronicle and the author-composer of the fourth part. That the fourth part of the chronicle is an autograph is indicated not only by paleography but also by the material features of the text. Joshua wrote parts 1, 2, and 3 on previously inscribed parchment, while he wrote part 4 on fresh parchment. Part 4 contains blank spaces in the text, perhaps because Joshua wished to add further information later. It also contains two notes intended to help Joshua recall topics about which he wanted to write. See Harrak, *The Chronicle of Zuqnīn, Parts III and IV: A.D. 488–775: Translated from Syriac with Notes and Introduction*, Mediaeval Sources in Translation 36 (Toronto, 1999), 1–17.

38 T. Dorandi, *Le styler et la tablette: Dans le secret des auteurs antiques* (Paris, 2000), 51–60; A. Carlini, “Abbozzo di inno ad Εἰρήνη di un poeta dilettante del sec. I d.C.,” in *L'antico e la sua eredità: Atti del Colloquio internazionale di studi in onore di Antonio Garzya, Napoli, 20–21 settembre 2002*, ed. U. Criscuolo (Naples, 2004), 21–29.

39 J.-L. Fournet, *Hellénisme dans l'Égypte du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle: La bibliothèque et l'oeuvre de Dioscore d'Aphrodité*, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1999), and L. S. B. MacCoull, *Dioscorus of Aphrodito: His Work and His World* (Berkeley, 1988).

40 In this respect it also contrasts with part 4 of the *Chronicle of Zuqnīn*. However, part 4 contains far fewer annotations than do papyrological examples (see note 37). Thus, the lack of annotations does not necessarily disprove that V is an autograph.

41 Letters: the authors quote the text of a letter that Symeon sent to Emperor Theodosius. It is plausible that Symeon sent such a letter, although it is unlikely that Emperor Theodosius granted his request (Torrey, “The Letters” [n. 11 above], 254–57). Following the conclusion of the Syriac *Life of Symeon*, the authors include a letter written to Symeon from the priest Kosmas (V, fols. 77r–79r; As., 394–97). Apologia: both Theodoret's *History of the Monks of Syria* and the Syriac *Life* include a defense of Symeon's column standing that gives the same list of scriptural examples. There is no other indication that the authors of the Syriac *Life* referred to Theodoret's text as a source. Thus, the authors of both texts shared a common source, probably some sort of apologia in circulation about the saint (A. J. Festugière, *Antioche païenne et chrétienne: Libanius, Chrysostome et les moines de Syrie*, Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 194 [Paris, 1959], 354–55; Doran, 57–59). Miracle collections: R. Doran identifies potential groups of miracles that may have circulated prior to the composition of the Vatican manuscript; see “Compositional Comments on the Syriac Versions of the Life of Simeon Stylites,” *AB* 102 (1984): 35–48.

coalesced the mythmaking powers of the local community into a desired scheme and, as a result, crystallized in time and space a set of fluid interpretations of Symeon.<sup>42</sup> It also participated in a broader tradition of storytelling at the cult site—a tradition that predated the work of the authors, that the authors themselves perpetuated, and, as later sections of this article show, that continued long after the composition of the text of the Vatican manuscript.

As a text that employs at least some oral sources, V stands on the cusp of oral storytelling and written narrative. Given their oral nature, storytelling traditions can be only partially represented in a literary text. For this reason, an analysis of a storytelling tradition as it appears in a written document requires both anthropological and literary methods.<sup>43</sup> In her study of oral accounts of the life and miracles of Padre Cícero Romão Batista (d. 1934) told at his pilgrimage site in Juazeiro do Norte, Brazil, Candace Slater compares stories narrated by local residents with those narrated by pilgrims visiting from other towns. Although the stories of both communities share literary antecedents, narrative structure, and the concept of the miraculous, they generally diverge in their representation of the

holy man and his miracles.<sup>44</sup> Local residents engage in systematic privatization in their oral accounts, presenting even the most familiar tales as their own memories or as memories held by other community members. In contrast, pilgrims favor the construction of a communally meaningful legend.<sup>45</sup> Slater's study is, of course, chronologically and geographically distant from fifth- and sixth-century Syria. But while her findings do not serve as evidence for the historical setting of the late antique manuscripts of the Syriac *Life of Symeon*, they do offer a compelling framework for studying the text of the Vatican manuscript as a distinctly local account of Symeon's life and miracles. They also help us understand changes in the textual tradition, as we will see in later sections of this article.

Slater identifies six characteristics that distinguish the tales of local residents as a group: a high degree of personal involvement, concern for concrete detail, focus on the local community associated with the pilgrimage center, lack of ordering principle, narrative variety, and resistance to standardization.<sup>46</sup> In what follows I address these six characteristics as found in V's version of the Syriac *Life*. They are narrative strategies familiar in late antiquity, and hagiographers utilize them even when they are removed in time and place from the saint. In this particular case, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar employ these strategies in a context that supports them as being historically legitimate. Yet their efforts do not result in a disinterested representation of the saint. Rather, the authors' insider claims assert the exclusivity of the local community's interpretation of Symeon.

### *Personal Involvement*

As noted at the outset of this article, two narrative sections (Symeon's youth and his early ascetic practice; his death) frame a sizable collection of accounts of Symeon's miracles, visions, and ascetic practices. This middle section offers some of the material most illuminating on how Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar, as well as later scribes, made sense of Symeon's career and, in particular, his unusual choice to stand on a

42 For discussion of the importance of this moment in the formation of a hagiographic tradition, see T. J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1988), 32–35. Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar's effort to gather and organize miracles should be seen in dialogue with similar miracle collections at cult sites across the eastern Mediterranean, such as at Thekla's cult site outside of Seleukeia, Symeon the Younger's cult site outside of Antioch, and Artemios's cult site in Constantinople. For this genre of literature, see S. Efthymiadis, "Greek Byzantine Collections of Miracles: A Chronological and Bibliographical Survey," *Symbolae Osloenses* 74.1 (1999): 195–211, and S. Efthymiadis and V. Déroche, "Greek Hagiography in Late Antiquity (Fourth–Seventh Centuries)," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, vol. 1, *Periods and Places*, ed. S. Efthymiadis (Farnham, Surrey, 2011), 66–79. For two fruitful analyses of late antique miracle collections, see S. F. Johnson, *The Life and Miracles of Thekla: A Literary Study* (Washington, DC, 2006), and P. Cox Miller, *The Corporeal Imagination: Signifying the Holy in Late Ancient Christianity* (Philadelphia, 2009).

43 On oral storytelling and methods for analysis in epic poetry, see A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, 2nd ed., ed. S. Mitchell and G. Nagy (Cambridge, 2000); D. F. Reynolds, *Heroic Poets, Poetic Heroes: The Ethnography of Performance in an Arabic Oral Epic Tradition* (Ithaca, NY, 1995); and G. Nagy, *Poetry as Performance: Homer and Beyond* (Cambridge, 1996).

44 C. Slater, *Trail of Miracles: Stories from a Pilgrimage in Northeast Brazil* (Berkeley, 1986), 103–16.

45 Ibid., 4.

46 Ibid., 117–32. Whereas Slater combines personal involvement and narrative variety in one category, I have separated them into two distinct categories.







who served him, but only those whom he loved and trusted.<sup>58</sup>

According to this and similar passages, Symeon disclosed his visions only to the most trusted and beloved of his disciples.<sup>59</sup> He gave explicit instructions not to repeat these visions until after he had passed away. The authors stress Symeon's guardedness at least partially in defense of the saint. In his day Symeon had a reputation for vainglory, and certainly the authors saw it as their task to combat such rumors.<sup>60</sup> Even so, their emphasis on the fact that a small and special group possessed secret knowledge to be revealed only following Symeon's death again presents the narrative of the Syriac *Life* as offering privileged insight into Symeon's deeds—insight possessed only by the local community.<sup>61</sup>

After enigmatically referring to themselves in first-person statements throughout the text, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar close with a colophon

58 Translation adapted from Doran, 125. The first line ("Now about the visions . . .") serves as the title of the section.

59 For a similar plea by Symeon to keep his visions a secret until after his death, see V, fol. 48v, col. 1, ln. 13–fol. 49r, col. 2, ln. 1; As., 343.6–344.7; Doran, 157–58. This admonition is retained in B<sub>1</sub>, fol. 114r, col. 1, ln. 15–fol. 114v, col. 1, ln. 24; B<sub>j</sub>, 615.1–616.2; Lent, 179–80; it is truncated in G (Gar., 47.25–36). This section of B<sub>2</sub> survives but is illegible at points due to damage to the manuscript (B<sub>2</sub>, fol. 151v, col. 1, ln. 8–col. 2, ln. 14).

60 According to the *Life of Daniel the Stylite* (ch. 7.16), monks from Samosata in Mesopotamia contended that Symeon's column standing was only a vainglorious proceeding; H. Delehay, ed., *Les saints stylites*, SubsHag 14 (Brussels, 1923), 7–8; E. Dawes and N. H. Baynes, trans., *Three Byzantine Saints: Contemporary Biographies of Daniel the Stylite, St. Theodore of Sykeon, and St. John the Almsgiver*, 2nd ed. (1977; reprint, Crestwood, NY, 1996), 10. According to the *Epitome* of John Diakrinomenos's lost *Ecclesiastical History* (bk. 5), monks from Egypt found fault with Symeon's column standing and refused to be in communion with him. See G. C. Hansen, ed., *Theodoros Anagnostes Kirchengeschichte*, GCS (Berlin, 1971), 153–54, frags. 534–37; translation in Price, *A History of the Monks of Syria* (n. 7 above), 174n16.

61 Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar's emphasis on secrecy echoes the Gospel according to Mark, and the echo was probably intentional; the two authors no doubt knew the Gospels well. There Jesus bars the disciples from disclosing his identity (3:12) and explains parables in private (4:33–34). Following the transfiguration, Jesus forbids the disciples from recounting the event until after the resurrection (9:9). These demands for secrecy emphasize the revelatory nature of the gospel. In my view, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar draw on these aspects of Mark in order to set apart their story as newly revealed and to define a limited set of disciples empowered by their teacher.

in which they at long last reveal their own names as well as the names of the priest Symeon and the arch-deacon Kyrus, who may have paid for the manuscript's production.<sup>62</sup> The choice to disclose personal identities makes tangible the first-person references throughout the narrative.<sup>63</sup> The authors become actors within the text. In addition, the colophon provides an opportunity for the authors to frame their task of writing a hagiography as a performance of penance. The composition of the book secures remembrance for their departed relatives, redemption for their own souls, and prayers from future readers.<sup>64</sup> The act of writing (and reading, as we will see later) invites the redemptive powers of the saint. In these ways, the colophon positions Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar as model participants in Symeon's cult.<sup>65</sup>

Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar highlight that they report the words of Symeon, record the stories of fellow eyewitnesses, and divulge secret ascetic practices and visions. This previously restricted knowledge is made publicly available for the first time in the composition of the Syriac *Life*. As sociologists note, discourses of secrecy are strategies for accumulating social capital. By presenting select knowledge as secret, its possessors create an aura of prestige around and enhance desire

62 The colophon from V is not copied in later manuscripts. Only this manuscript gives Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar's names.

63 Syriac scribes regularly identify contemporary church or monastic leadership in association with the production, purchase, and use of manuscripts. In doing so, they assert a specific institutional affiliation and matrix of social relationships. For sample colophons disclosing such details, see S. P. Brock, "Manuscripts Copied in Edessa," in *Orientalia Christiana: Festschrift für Hubert Kaufhold zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. P. Bruns and H. O. Luthé (Wiesbaden, 2013), 109–27. For a case study using colophons to address social history, see H. L. Murre-van den Berg, "Generous Devotion: Women in the Church of the East between 1550 and 1850," *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 7.1 (2004): 11–54.

64 Early Syriac colophons frequently include prayer formulae in which the scribe seeks forgiveness and divine reward. See S. Brock, "Fashions in Early Syriac Colophons," *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 18.2 (2015): 364–65.

65 Greek hagiographies from late antiquity often contain a preface in which the author identifies himself and reflects on his role: he explains that he writes the text in order to record the memory of the saint for posterity and often claims to have benefited from the saint's miraculous powers, thereby representing himself as the prototype of the saint's clientele. See Rapp, "Storytelling as Spiritual Communication," 432; D. Krueger, *Writing and Holiness: The Practice of Authorship in the Early Christian East* (Philadelphia, 2004), 9.

for that knowledge.<sup>66</sup> This narrative strategy promotes the authors and the closely related cult community as authorized storytellers. It also invites the readers to become possessors of their knowledge, initiating those readers into the perspectives of a devotional community centered on Symeon.

### *Concern for Concrete Detail and Focus on Telanissos*

Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar privatize their version of the text by adding concrete details to their stories, details that are often associated closely with the village of Telanissos and neighboring villages.<sup>67</sup> They disclose the names of local leaders: The itinerant inspector Mar Bas mentored Symeon.<sup>68</sup> The priest Daniel gave Symeon a plot of land on which to build his enclosure.<sup>69</sup> The chief Mar Maris stored a vessel of oil blessed by Symeon in his house to share with those in need.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, the authors maintain precision in regard to place, identifying the names of specific neighboring villages, such as Bayt Lāhā and Šīḥ.<sup>71</sup> They also make exact, albeit unsystematic, references to the physical environment of the cult site. The enclosure included walls, a Eucharistic niche, and a door.<sup>72</sup> The arrangement of the space changed several times during Symeon's life, as walls were pulled down and various

columns were constructed.<sup>73</sup> Finally, the authors concentrate on situations of concern to residents: Symeon protected Telanissos by ending droughts, warding off rodents that were threatening crops, and confronting unjust administrators.<sup>74</sup>

Prior to the use of epigraphic evidence, scholars associated the composition of the Syriac *Life* with Telanissos by pointing to the text's precise references to geography, village leadership, and local politics.<sup>75</sup> These same features, especially the concern for local politics, also attracted the attention of Peter Brown, who argued that as a class of small, independent farmers superseded large landowners in northern Syria, they sought out new patrons to navigate the internal workings of village life.<sup>76</sup> Certainly Symeon played an economic role in village life, but it is also worth noting that Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar made a distinct choice to emphasize these elements of his career.<sup>77</sup> This

66 G. Simmel, "The Sociology of Secrecy and of Secret Societies," *American Journal of Sociology* 11.4 (1906): 441–98; E. Tiryakian, "Toward the Sociology of Esoteric Culture," 491–512; R. F. Campany, *Making Transcendents: Ascetics and Social Memory in Early Medieval China* (Honolulu, 2009), 88–128.

67 I count among these concrete details specific names, places, and events included in the text and physical descriptions of the saint—points drawn from Slater. Slater also discusses the concern for inconsequential detail, the use of specific tenses of verbs to heighten a sense of immediacy, and the attempt to situate supernatural details in familiar frames; see *Trail of Miracles* (n. 44 above), 122–26.

68 V, fol. 12r, col. 2, ln. 25; As., 287.4; Doran, 118.

69 V, fol. 12v, col. 2, lns. 11–17; As., 288.1–5; Doran, 118.

70 V, fol. 12v, col. 2, ln. 17–fol. 13r, col. 2, ln. 9; As., 288.6–289.4; Doran, 118–19.

71 Bayt Lāhā: V, fol. 14r, col. 1, ln. 2; As., 290.17; Doran, 120. See also Todt and Vest, *Syria*, 2:998. Šīḥ: V, fol. 15v, col. 1, ln. 27; As., 293.15; Doran, 122. See also J.-L. Biscop and J.-P. Sordini, "L'accès Nord au domaine de Syméon le stylite: Le village de Shih (Sheikh ed Deir-Shader, Bardakhan)," in *Sur les pas des Araméens chrétiens: Mélanges offerts à Alain Desreumaux*, ed. F. Briquel-Chatonnet and M. Debié (Paris, 2010), 259–68, and Todt and Vest, *Syria*, 2:1741.

72 Walls and door: V, fol. 58v, col. 2, ln. 20–fol. 59r, col. 2, ln. 27; As., 360.24–361.25; Doran, 169–70. Eucharistic niche: V, fol. 60v, col. 1, ln. 10–fol. 61r, col. 1, ln. 1; As., 363.35–364.28; Doran, 171–72.

73 Pulling down of walls: V, fol. 20v, col. 2, lns. 14–15, and fol. 48v, col. 1, lns. 20–22; As., 301.17–18, 343.10–12; Doran, 128, 157. Construction of columns: V, fol. 67v, col. 2, ln. 25–fol. 69r, col. 1, ln. 16; As., 376.31–378.27; Doran, 181–83. Archaeologists have confirmed the existence of two different columns: the column now located at the center of the cruciform basilica as well as an earlier column located in the court between the basilica's south and east arms. To the west of the earlier column, they have identified the remains of a rudimentary structure that was probably part of the sanctuary surrounding the column during Symeon's life. See J.-L. Biscop, "Le sanctuaire et le village des pèlerins à Saint-Syméon-le-Stylite (Syrie du Nord): Nouvelles recherches, nouvelles méthodes," *CRAI* 153.4 (2009): 1424–30 and figs. 3–5.

74 Ending droughts: V, fol. 46v, col. 2, ln. 1–fol. 48v, col. 1, ln. 13; As., 339.31–343.6; Doran, 155–57. Warding off rodents: V, fol. 32v, col. 2, ln. 3–fol. 33r, col. 2, ln. 14; As., 318.24–319.29; Doran, 140–41. Confronting administrators: V, fol. 29r, col. 2, ln. 14–fol. 29v, col. 2, ln. 16; As., 313.16–314.4; Doran, 137.

75 Peeters, *Orient et Byzance* (n. 5 above), 114; Delehay, *Les saints stylites* (n. 60 above), viii.

76 P. Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *JRS* 61 (1971): 85–86. For more recent work on the holy man, patronage, and local politics, see C. Grey, *Constructing Communities in the Late Roman Countryside* (Cambridge, 2011), 121–47.

77 For critiques of Brown's article and a call to studying hagiographies as discursive texts, see A. Cameron, "On Defining the Holy Man," in *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown*, ed. J. Howard-Johnston and P. A. Hayward (Oxford, 1999), 27–43, and S. Elm, "Introduction," *JEChrSt* 6.3 (1998): 343–51. Since publishing his article, Brown has refined his ideas pertaining to the "Holy Man." See, for example, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity, 1971–1997," *JEChrSt* 6.3 (1998): 353–76.











to convert to Christianity following Symeon's appearance to him in a vision. The authors close the account by stating, *ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ* [ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ] (Whoever heard him relating the story gave praise to God who so expanded the triumph of his worshippers everywhere).<sup>108</sup> Similarly, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṣar conclude miracles with formulaic statements that supplicants departed the site *ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ* (healed and praising our Lord).<sup>109</sup> By prompting recipients and witnesses to share their accounts on their travels home, the authors promote the reputation of the saint and the site.<sup>110</sup>

These references to storytelling and praise encourage the creation of new oral testimony about the saint, both at the cult site and away from it. As discussed above, epigraphic evidence suggests that the manuscript was composed in association with the construction of the first major pilgrims' hostel in Telanissos. Whereas the hostel supported pilgrims who visited Symeon's site in Telanissos, the manuscript gave them the local community's own version of the saint's life.<sup>111</sup> The text, sections of which may have been read aloud to pilgrims at the hostel, offered visitors words, phrases, and stories through which to interpret their own interaction with the saint. It also presented structured narratives that pilgrims could emulate as they told their own stories.<sup>112</sup> Thus, the authors standardize the narrative of Symeon's life while simultaneously anticipating the growth of the tradition.

In conclusion, the Vatican manuscript gives an account of Symeon's life from the perspective of two local residents. Drawing on their proximity to Symeon and the daily workings of the cult site, the authors craft

a narrative of Symeon's life distinguished by its private character. The authors stress their personal knowledge of Symeon through the use of first-person remarks, references to Symeon's most intimate companions as sources, and claims to knowledge of Symeon's secret ascetic practices and visions. Their constant concern for local people, places, and events positions the community at Telanissos front and center, even as they make clear Symeon's international profile. By emphasizing the physicality of Symeon's being, the authors present the local community as having special access to the saint's words and body. Similarly, the order of the text privileges the local community's experience of the saint. These choices heighten the intimacy of the text, asserting a deeply personal representation of the saint. Finally, the authors engage with a local storytelling tradition. They promote this tradition through their emphasis on the community as storytellers, crystallize it through their composition of the text, and present it as available for future devotees to use as a pattern. The following section examines how a second cult community, pilgrims, made this textual and storytelling tradition their own.

### British Library Add. 14484, fols. 134r–152v: A Pilgrim's Text

The next glimpse into the life of the text comes in the form of B<sub>2</sub> (fig. 3). The handwriting of the manuscript dates to the sixth century. The manuscript is substantially damaged: only about 30 percent of it survives, in total nineteen stained and torn leaves. The end of the text is not preserved among the extant folios; thus, no colophon reports a date of completion, place of production, or details about the scribe(s). My analysis of the manuscript tradition suggests that the version recorded in B<sub>2</sub> is a revision of the text of the Vatican manuscript or a closely related version. It represents the second-oldest extant version of the *Syriac Life*.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>113</sup> This manuscript has received little attention from scholars. Wright first cataloged the manuscript in *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum* (n. 2 above), 3:1152–53. Peeters briefly introduced it in his discussion of the *Syriac Life in Orient et Byzance* (n. 5 above), 115. I have provided the first full analysis of this manuscript in "Symeon and the Making of the Stylite" (n. 12 above), 145–76. For the specific sections of the text that this manuscript preserves, see table 2. Fol. 152 is not original to the manuscript but

108 V, fol. 39r, col. 1, ln. 23–col. 2, ln. 2; translation adapted from Doran, 147. V, fol. 39r, col. 2, lns. 1–2, is damaged; I follow Doran in reconstructing this passage from B<sub>1</sub>, fol. 105r, col. 1, lns. 17–18. This chapter in B<sub>1</sub> follows V closely, although not always word for word.

109 V, fol. 14v, col. 2, lns. 2–3; As., 291.30–31; Doran, 121. For another example, see V, fol. 15r, col. 1, ln. 17; As., 292.16; Doran, 121.

110 Early Byzantine miracle collections regularly include formulaic statements at the close of individual miracles in which the supplicant is said to go forth praising God. Krueger notes the specific link between praising God and narrating the story of the disease and its cure in his analysis of the *Miracles of Artemios (Writing and Holiness* [n. 65 above], 66–68).

111 Boero, "The Context of Production" (n. 12 above), 333–49.

112 Krueger, *Writing and Holiness*, 69.





Fig. 3. British Library Add. 14484, fol. 144v. © British Library Board. Reproduced with permission of the British Library.



Despite the fragmentary nature of the manuscript, it is possible to study the entirety of this recension thanks to the survival of a Georgian translation of the Syriac *Life* preserved in the Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai, Georgian 6, folios 12r–66v (G), which dates at the latest to 983. It is unclear whether the scribe himself translated the manuscript into Georgian or instead worked with an earlier Georgian translation of the text.<sup>114</sup> A comparison of B<sub>2</sub> and G reveals that the two versions bear a striking resemblance to one another. Both texts display a nearly identical truncated narrative and include unique details not found in any other Syriac manuscript.<sup>115</sup> The two texts never stray from one another in their narrative order.<sup>116</sup> Thus, G can be used to reconstruct the sections of B<sub>2</sub> that are no longer extant. In the following discussion of G, I employ Gérard Garitte's scholarly Latin translation of G rather than the original Georgian, which I cannot read fluently.<sup>117</sup>

contains a note written in the ninth or tenth century and bound to the manuscript at that time; I discuss this note in my conclusion, below.

114 Garitte published a transcription and a scholarly Latin translation of this manuscript (*Vies géorgiennes*, 1:i–viii, 1–77; 2:i–ii, 1–53). In addition to the translation of the Syriac *Life*, the manuscript contains several other texts copied by three different scribes. John Zosimos copied fols. 1r, 84r–200v, and 223v–225r, recording in them three dates for the production of this text: 981 (fol. 200v), 982 (fol. 183v), and 983 (fol. 224r). Two unnamed scribes copied fols. 2r–83v and 201r–223r, which include the Georgian translation of the Syriac *Life of Symeon*. Garitte held that this version of the Syriac *Life* was copied before John Zosimos completed his work. Consequently, he gave 983 as the terminus ante quem for its completion (*ibid.*, 1:i–ii).

115 For example, when Symeon cured a girl from the village of Bayt Lāhā, V and B<sub>1</sub> specify that he had been in his enclosure for 14 months (V, fol. 14r, col. 1, ln. 23–col. 2, ln. 2; As., 290.32–36, and B<sub>1</sub>, fol. 63v, col. 2, lns. 6–13; Bj., 530.18–20). Alternatively, B<sub>2</sub> and G give 8 months (B<sub>2</sub>: fol. 143r, col. 1, ln. 23–col. 2, ln. 3, and Gar., 13.21). Similarly, when Symeon cured a boy from inner Anzitene, Garitte gave a Latin transliteration *dadianos* as the name of the general (Gar., 24.13). This is more similar to the proper name Dadinis (𐩃𐩣𐩬𐩪) found in B<sub>2</sub>, fol. 149v, col. 2, ln. 5, than the name Dionysius (𐩃𐩣𐩬𐩪) found in V, fol. 54r, col. 1, ln. 4; As., 352.5, and in B<sub>1</sub>, fol. 80v, col. 1, ln. 15; Bj., 560.2.

116 Most noticeable on this measure is the placement of Symeon's letter to Emperor Theodosius criticizing him for allowing the procurator Askeplades to return property to the Jews. V and B<sub>1</sub> place this letter after Symeon's death in celebration of his greatness (V, fol. 73v, col. 2, ln. 7–fol. 74v, col. 1, ln. 2; As., 387.30–389.7, and B<sub>1</sub>, fol. 126r, col. 2, ln. 8–fol. 127r, col. 1, ln. 11; Bj., 636.5–637.17). B<sub>2</sub> and G both place the letter following Symeon's ending of the drought in Telanissos (B<sub>2</sub>, fol. 151v, col. 2, ln. 15–col. 2, ln. 25, and Gar., 48.1–27).

117 See note 5 on the high quality of the Latin translation.

The previous section demonstrated that the authors of V were residents of Telanissos who provided an account of Symeon's life in dialogue with local storytelling traditions at the cult site. In contrast, B<sub>2</sub> offers insight into a pilgrim's perspective on Symeon. Again following Slater, I argue that the scribe responsible for the text of B<sub>2</sub> attempted to create a unified narrative of Symeon's life whose structure paralleled a pilgrim's movement through time and space. Whereas the everyday lives of local residents were constantly entangled in Symeon's actions and the activities of the cult site, pilgrims enjoyed an intensely powerful but more distant experience of the saint. Their perspective is reflected in the reduced role of personal memory in the text as well as the text's growing standardization, its focus on pilgrimage, and its ordering principle.<sup>118</sup>

### *Reduced Role of Personal Memory and Growing Standardization*

Slater makes a case for a reduced role of memory and increased standardization by noting that pilgrims to Juazeiro told relatively few tales about the saint. Often pilgrims knew only ten stories or fewer, a striking decrease from the fifty that a resident might narrate. Whereas a local resident could accumulate a nearly endless store of personal memories about the saint, a pilgrim's contact with the saint at the cult site was brief. Consequently, their stories often omitted details dear to the hearts of residents and presented the saint in an increasingly abstract manner. They frequently deferred to accomplished storytellers or to the regularly available pamphlets recounting the saint's life. The reduced role of personal memory, the increased abstraction, and the reliance on other sources about the saint created a more standardized account of the saint's life than that presented by local residents.<sup>119</sup>

Diverging from Slater's case study, B<sub>2</sub> does not reduce the number of miracles about Symeon. In fact,

118 Slater, *Trail of Miracles* (n. 44 above), 118, 132–48. Slater's full list of characteristics of pilgrims' stories is as follows: reduced role of personal memory, growing standardization, increased abstraction, use of fantastic detail, focus on pilgrimage and individual pilgrims, presence of an ordering principle, and tendency toward the development of a "life." In my analysis, I discuss increased abstraction together with memory and standardization. I omit the use of fantastic detail because it is not demonstrated by the B<sub>2</sub> version of the Syriac *Life*. I incorporate the tendency toward developing a life into my analysis of the order of the text of B<sub>2</sub>, as well as into my analysis of the text of B<sub>1</sub>.

the scribe responsible for this version not only reproduces all the miracles contained in V but incorporates new ones into the text. (These new miracles are discussed below.) Although the scribe retains the emphasis

on miracles, he regularly shortens passages by removing details from Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar's account: as a result he reduces the role of local memory and makes the text more standard. For example:

V, fol. 58v, col. 1, ln. 12–col. 2, ln. 20; As., 360.3–23	B <sub>2</sub> , fol. 144v, col. 2, ln. 19–fol. 145r, col. 1, ln. 10
<p>מעשה נא דהלילך. עבד חסיד מל אלף רכסו. רפח רחל מלימל כסא רפח. ויגד וליג רפח רחל מלימל כסא רפח. ויגד וליג נא עבד מעשה חסיד מלימל רחל רכסו. וכענין. נא נא עבד רחל רכסו, רפח רחל חסיד נא עבד חסיד. ויגד וליג רכסו, נא רפח רחל מלימל כסא רפח. ויגד וליג נא עבד מעשה חסיד מלימל רחל רכסו. וכענין. נא נא עבד רחל רכסו, רפח רחל חסיד נא עבד חסיד. ויגד וליג רכסו, נא רפח רחל מלימל כסא רפח. ויגד וליג נא עבד מעשה חסיד מלימל רחל רכסו. וכענין. נא נא עבד רחל רכסו, רפח רחל חסיד נא עבד חסיד. ויגד וליג רכסו, נא רפח רחל מלימל כסא רפח. ויגד וליג נא עבד מעשה חסיד מלימל רחל רכסו.</p>	<p>חסיד נא עבד חסיד. ויגד וליג רכסו, נא רפח רחל מלימל כסא רפח. ויגד וליג נא עבד מעשה חסיד מלימל רחל רכסו. וכענין. נא נא עבד רחל רכסו, רפח רחל חסיד נא עבד חסיד. ויגד וליג רכסו, נא רפח רחל מלימל כסא רפח. ויגד וליג נא עבד מעשה חסיד מלימל רחל רכסו. וכענין. נא נא עבד רחל רכסו, רפח רחל חסיד נא עבד חסיד. ויגד וליג רכסו, נא רפח רחל מלימל כסא רפח. ויגד וליג נא עבד מעשה חסיד מלימל רחל רכסו. וכענין. נא נא עבד רחל רכסו, רפח רחל חסיד נא עבד חסיד. ויגד וליג רכסו, נא רפח רחל מלימל כסא רפח. ויגד וליג נא עבד מעשה חסיד מלימל רחל רכסו.</p>
Now the priest of Tell-Nešše greatly loved the saint and was always with him. The saint stood in his field and whatever the saint wore—he was clothed in skins—the priest bought at his own expense. One day that priest and his entire congregation came to the saint on business. One of the deacons, who was the church steward, said jokingly to the saint, “Untie that purse you have and make a gift to my master’s household.” But the saint said to him, “Did someone tell you I have money, or have you yourself noticed this?” At once his innards changed and were loose as water and he destroyed his garments and became a laughingstock. They carried him down and he was two days in great affliction, tormented and gnashing his teeth. Then he died. <sup>120</sup>	One day the priest of Tell-Nešše led his entire congregation. They came to greet him and to be blessed by him. One of the deacons said jokingly to him, “Untie the purse you have and make a gift to my master’s household.” The saint said to him, “Did someone tell you that I have a purse or have you yourself perceived this?” At once his innards changed and were loose as water.  He went down as they carried him and he was two days in affliction. Then he died. <sup>121</sup>

The two passages recount the same core narrative. A priest brought his congregation to Symeon, a deacon made an insolent remark, and Symeon consequently punished the deacon with violent diarrhea followed by death. However, the passage from B<sub>2</sub> omits portions of the passage characteristic of V: first, the statement that the priest was responsible for paying for Symeon's plot of land and that he brought his congregation to Symeon on church business, details that place Symeon in a web of local relationships, and second, the description of Symeon's clothing, a detail that brings to mind Symeon's physical being. The omission of these highly

individualized details increases the uniformity of the passage in B<sub>2</sub>. It places primary emphasis on Symeon's miraculous ability to punish an unbeliever rather than on his role in the socioreligious life of Telanissos.

Time and again, the scribe responsible for this version of the text standardizes the contents by eradicating details loved by residents.<sup>122</sup> In some passages this means cutting full lines; in others it means reducing the length of a specific sentence by including only one verb rather than two.<sup>123</sup> The result is a truncated narrative

119 Ibid., 132–39.

120 Translation adapted from Doran, 169.

121 Translation my own with close reference to Doran's translation in the parallel passage.

122 For a similar removal of such details for Brazilian pilgrims, see Slater, *Trail of Miracles*, 133–34.

123 For more miracle accounts that have been shortened, compare the healing of a man from Aleppo in V, fol. 57v, col. 1, ln. 6–fol. 58r, col. 1, ln. 9; As., 358.17–359.9; Doran, 168, with B<sub>2</sub>, fol. 144r, col. 1, ln. 13–col. 2, ln. 21; the protection of a local boy from a snake in V, fol. 58r, col. 1, ln. 9–col. 2, ln. 15; As., 359.10–28; Doran, 168, with



that focuses more on the act of the saint's intercession than on his relationship with the local community. Indeed, most pilgrims would have been far more concerned about Symeon's ability to grant miracles than about his role in village life. The change of wording in the opening line of Symeon's healing of the young girl from Bayt Lāhā at the behest of her father drives home this point. V reads *ܡܢ ܕܥܡ ܕܒܝܬ ܠܗܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ* (There was a man of Bayt Lāhā, a village which was separated from *Tell-Neššē* by about three miles).<sup>124</sup> In contrast, B<sub>2</sub> reads *ܡܢ ܕܥܡ ܕܒܝܬ ܠܗܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ* (A man came to him from Bayt Lāhā, a village that was three miles away from the *enclosure*).<sup>125</sup> Whereas V highlights Telanissos, B<sub>2</sub> focuses on the enclosure—the place where miracles were granted.

In addition to discarding details important to the local community, the scribe of this version presents a portrait of the saint that is impersonal and abstract.<sup>126</sup> He frequently removes references to first-person accounts.<sup>127</sup> The G recension omits Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar's names and their request for prayers. Moreover, it drops entire passages of praise to Symeon, further heightening the immediacy of his miracles.<sup>128</sup> It also regularly ignores Symeon's physical attributes. In the passage above in which Symeon punished a deacon, B<sub>2</sub> does not follow V in describing Symeon as clothed in skins. Similarly, in the account of Symeon's tonsure by Mara, Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar compare his appearance to that of David, quoting 1 Samuel 16:12.<sup>129</sup> B<sub>2</sub> leaves out the passage from Samuel and significantly condenses the description of Symeon's physical features, simply recording,

*ܐܝܬܐ ܡܡܥܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ* (When that bishop saw how becoming his face was, he marveled at him).<sup>130</sup> When Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar describe the healing of Symeon's rotting foot, they use three clauses: "his body grew strong, his presence was radiant, and his face shone."<sup>131</sup> G reduces this passage to a single clause: *resplenduit vultus eius* (his face shone).<sup>132</sup> The scribe responsible for the text of B<sub>2</sub> is less interested than the authors of V in first-person accounts, panegyric to the saint, and the saint's physical appearance. He instead chooses to emphasize the aspects of Symeon's career most important to a pilgrim: his ability to heal the sick, offer protection to the weak, bring justice to the maltreated, and intercede in strained political situations.<sup>133</sup>

In her study of pilgrims to Juazeiro, Slater notes that pilgrims were dependent on printed materials that gave highlights from the saint's life.<sup>134</sup> The shortened version of the text found in B<sub>2</sub> would have been more appealing to them for that purpose than the V version of the text. V was probably meant to be read aloud to pilgrims staying in the village's hostel, but its length ensured that it could not be delivered from start to finish in a single sitting. One can imagine that readings of V functioned much like local villagers' oral renditions of miracles: narrators delivered individual accounts of miracles and groups of miracles decontextualized from the full life. In contrast, B<sub>2</sub> could be read aloud

B<sub>2</sub>, fol. 144r, col. 2, ln. 22–fol. 144v, col. 1, ln. 25; and the healing of a youth from the low country, V, fol. 58r, col. 2, ln. 15–fol. 58v, col. 1, ln. 11; As., 359.29–360.2; Doran, 169, with B<sub>2</sub>, fol. 144v, col. 1, ln. 25–col. 2, ln. 19.

124 V, fol. 14r, col. 1, lns. 1–5; As., 290.16–19; translation from Doran, 120 (emphasis added).

125 B<sub>2</sub>, fol. 143r, col. 1, lns. 1–4 (emphasis added).

126 For a discussion of increasing abstraction in pilgrims' accounts, see Slater, *Trail of Miracles*, 136–39.

127 See note 49.

128 V, fol. 21v, col. 1, ln. 23–fol. 23v, col. 1, ln. 20; As., 302.27–305.15; Doran, 129–31, is omitted from G at Gar., 31–33. For a full list of omissions, see table 2.

129 See notes 81 and 82.

130 B<sub>2</sub>, fol. 137v, col. 1, lns. 9–12; translation my own.

131 See note 83.

132 Gar., 34.2.

133 Tendency toward abstraction with regard to the stylites' physical appearance occurs not only in B<sub>2</sub> but also in graffiti in surrounding villages that may have been carved by pilgrims. These graffiti are nonfigurative sketches of the column composed of a base (often represented by a single horizontal line or triangle), a shaft (in the form of a single vertical line), and a platform (like the base, depicted with a horizontal line or triangle). The body of the saint is either replaced with the image of the cross or not shown at all. In these stylized sketches, the identity of the stylite is completely ignored: pilgrims have shifted their attention to the power of the column. See, for example, graffiti at Dayr Sim'ān and Bāftin, discussed by I. Peña, P. Castellana, and R. Fernández, *Les stylites syriens*, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Collectio Minor 16 (Milan, 1975), 192–94, figs. 44 and 46; Schachner, "The Archaeology of the Stylite" (n. 55 above), 371–72. D. T. M. Frankfurter describes these graffiti as "archetypal" figures in "Stylites and Phallobates: Pillar Religions in Late Antique Syria," *VChr* 44 (1990): 186.

134 Slater, *Trail of Miracles*, 135.

or silently in its entirety in just a few hours, much as Egeria describes doing when she visited Thekla's shrine near Seleukeia (modern Silifke). While at the martyrion, she read through the entire *Acts of Thekla*.<sup>135</sup> The written text provided a narrative frame for Egeria's veneration of the saint. It is possible to imagine the B<sub>2</sub> version of the Syriac *Life* being put to similar use.

Though the scribe responsible for B<sub>2</sub> may have composed the text with pilgrims in mind, it is of course impossible to know whether the B<sub>2</sub> manuscript was employed on pilgrimage. With that said, the material dimensions of B<sub>2</sub> would have suited the needs of pilgrims. The condensed text required fewer folios of parchment, and the manuscript itself frequently includes more lines per page than do V and B<sub>1</sub>. It would have been less expensive to produce and purchase, easier to transport, and quicker to flip through than the other versions. It is also striking that unlike V and B<sub>1</sub>, the manuscript bears signs of heavy use. Readers jotted down symbols in the margins, thereby indicating their desire to make quick reference to specific passages, perhaps during a visit to the cult site.<sup>136</sup>

In summary, the scribe responsible for the version of the text preserved in B<sub>2</sub> crafts a truncated narrative of the Syriac *Life* by eliding details about the local community at Telanissos, first-person accounts of the saint, passages of praise to Symeon, and details of his physical appearance. These omissions reduce the importance of local community memory, which was emphasized in V. They make the saint's personality and appearance abstract—the saint on his column floats above mundane society rather than being contextualized in it. In addition, this version easily supported the logistical needs of nonresidents making pilgrimage: it was quick to read and easy to flip through. The result is a

standardized text that emphasizes the primary goal of pilgrimage—that is, ritual intercession with the saint.

### *Focus on Pilgrimage and Individual Pilgrims*

In revising the text, the scribe responsible for this version made careful choices not only about what to omit but also about what to add. The additions include a cycle of seven new miracles in the middle of the narrative as well as Symeon's defeat of Isaurian raiders outside his hometown of Sisa.<sup>137</sup> The new miracles illuminate two important approaches to the text. First, the miraculous is continuous: Symeon's intercessory powers are always available to the pilgrim. By adding new miracles, the scribe extends the work of Bar Ḥaṭar and Symeon bar Eupolemos, participating in the cult's storytelling tradition just as modeled by the two original authors. The new miracles are similar in structure to those in the Vatican manuscript but forgo details that grow out of local memory of the saint. Like the shortened miracles in B<sub>2</sub>, the stories are brief, abstract, and lack personal memory. Second, the scribe prioritizes the pilgrim and his needs over those of local villagers. Thus, in the seven new miracles added to this recension, one supplicant was from Palestine, one from the west, one from Telanissos, and the remainder from unidentified places. These unidentified pilgrims could very well have been from Telanissos, but the scribe chooses not to label them as such. The scribe's focus is on preparing pilgrims for their visit to the saint.

135 Egeria, *Itinerary*, ch. 23.5; text in P. Maraval and M. C. Díaz y Díaz, *Journal de Voyage et Lettre sur la B<sup>se</sup> Égérie*, SC 296 (Paris, 1982), 230; translation in J. Wilkinson, trans., *Egeria's Travels*, 3rd ed. (1999; reprint, Oxford, 2006), 141. Since the *Acts* hovered on the boundary of the biblical canon in late antiquity, Egeria's reading of the *Acts* can be seen as displaying continuity with her reading of biblical scripture elsewhere on her pilgrimage. At the same time, the *Acts of Thekla* do focus on Thekla's life, much like a saint's life. In this way, it offers an important example of a pilgrim making use of a biography when venerating a saint.

136 For example, B<sub>2</sub>, fols. 143v, 144v, 145r, and 147r. Of course, such marks may be made in other contexts, such as liturgical or monastic settings.

137 Seven new miracles: B<sub>2</sub>, fol. 147r, col. 1, ln. 1–fol. 148r, col. 2, ln. 5, includes five and a half of the seven new miracles; the first miracle and the beginning of the second are not preserved because of damage to the manuscript. G presents all seven miracles: Gar., 20.13–22.20 (chs. 55–61). These new miracle accounts appear in some form in later manuscripts. In the appendix of his translation, Doran (in Doran, 214–20) translates versions of them from B<sub>1</sub>, fol. 74v, col. 2, ln. 21–fol. 77v, col. 1, ln. 15; Bj., 550.3–555.2; and Church of the Forty Martyrs, Mardin 271, fol. 143r, ln. 2–fol. 144v, ln. 15 (pp. 289.2–292.15). At this point in the recension, B<sub>2</sub> is closer to the Mardin manuscript than to B<sub>1</sub>. B<sub>2</sub>, fol. 135r, col. 1, ln. 1–fol. 135v, col. 2, ln. 16, also includes a short account of the Isaurian raid. These folios are damaged but the text can be reconstructed from British Library Add. 12174, fol. 19v, col. 1, ln. 41–fol. 20r, col. 1, ln. 12, and Gar., 4.4–5.3. Again, the Isaurian raid appears in later manuscripts. Doran (in Doran, 207–10) provides translations of accounts of the Isaurian raid in B<sub>1</sub>, fol. 51v, col. 1, ln. 8–fol. 53r, col. 1, ln. 6; Bj., 512.14–514.17; and Mardin 271, fol. 126v, ln. 13–fol. 128v, ln. 15 (pp. 256.13–260.15). The accounts in B<sub>1</sub> and the Mardin manuscript are longer and more detailed than in B<sub>2</sub>.





chs. 35–38 and 39–50 in Garitte's edition; see the discussion of these sections of V above). By uniting these passages, the scribe responsible for the text of B<sub>2</sub> both constructs a chronological narrative and asserts a causal relationship between episodes. Symeon's initial period of seclusion prepared him to execute local miracles; it also spurred longer periods of isolation.

The chronological and causal approach continues throughout the text. Altered by his initial period of miracles and isolation and no longer bound by earthly ties of mentorship and friendship, Symeon was ready to set up his first column—a stone two cubits high. His ascent precipitated Mar Bas's retreat into a monastery and the death of Symeon's brother Shemshi, with whom Symeon had originally embarked upon the ascetic life (chs. 51–54). Whereas this shedding of worldly relationships and ascent to the column occurs at the end of the Vatican manuscript (chs. 102 and 104–6 in Doran's translation), the scribe of the version preserved in B<sub>2</sub> makes these events a central step in the development of Symeon's holiness.

Newly empowered by his ascetic performance of column standing, Symeon carried out even more miracles, here not only for local residents but for long-distance pilgrims as well. This section of the text includes the seven new miracles discussed above (chs. 55–73). Next, Symeon experienced his most powerful visions: visits from Moses and Elijah (chs. 74–77). Finally, Symeon endured his most trying period of ascetic suffering: the infection and healing of his foot (chs. 78–85). His vision and suffering transformed him, enabling him to accomplish his most impressive miraculous achievements: political interventions, miraculous resolutions to natural catastrophes, appearances in far-off places, and ultimately his appeal to the emperor (chs. 86–101).

The chronological and causal arrangement of the text presents Symeon's visions and ascetic trials as critical steps in his spiritual growth. Symeon's ascent to the column in combination with his periods of intense suffering and visionary prayer shaped his ability to convey God's grace to his devotees. Each set of prayer practices (chs. 26–30, 39–50, 74–85) enhanced his ability to perform miracles, an ability that peaked in his intercession with the emperor (ch. 101). This approach to Symeon's life differs substantially from the approach of Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar, who portray Symeon as fulfilling God's purpose in a continuous rather than a progressive fashion. In V Symeon radiated God's

power but was always integrated into human affairs. In B<sub>2</sub> Symeon's column standing, visions, and ascetic prayer allowed for his progressive ascent from the mundane world.

The chronological and causal narrative models the potency of transformative prayer experiences for the reader. Just as intense prayer shaped Symeon's spiritual abilities, whether through ascetic training of the body or through visionary episodes, such activities also could alter the pilgrim's relationship with the divine. In this way, the organization of the narrative mirrors the prayer of a pilgrim's journey. In Slater's words, pilgrims' stories are structured so as to “connect a series of episodes that would otherwise function much as random dots on an experiential page. The goal-directed progression of the ‘life’ suggests the journey, toward a designated destination, upon which as pilgrims they consciously embark.”<sup>141</sup> Early pilgrimage itineraries complement this perspective, framing the pilgrim's journey as occurring in stages with intense moments of spiritual transformation. Egeria and the anonymous Bordeaux pilgrim describe progressive movement through the Near Eastern landscape marked by recurrent stops at sites mentioned in scripture. At each site Egeria prayed, read lines from scripture, and, in select cases, participated in liturgy.<sup>142</sup>

In addition to emulating the spiritual journey of the pilgrim, the B<sub>2</sub> version of the Syriac *Life* pairs nicely with the spatial organization of Symeon's monumental pilgrimage complex. Between 470 and 476, an unknown patron—possibly the emperor—began a renovation of the cult site.<sup>143</sup> The first phase of the project

141 Ibid., 146–47.

142 For Egeria's *Itinerary*, text in Maraval and Díaz y Díaz, *Journal de Voyage*, 119–319; translation in Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 107–66. For the Bordeaux Pilgrim, text in P. Geyer and O. Cuntz, “Itinerarium Burdigalense,” in *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 1–26; translation in Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 22–34.

143 Archaeologists and historians are unsure of precisely when building commenced. R. Lane Fox dates it to 470 under Emperor Leo (d. 474), linking imperial support for the project with Daniel the Stylite's influence on the emperor; see “The Life of Daniel,” in *Portraits: Biographical Representations in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire*, ed. M. J. Edwards and S. Swain (Oxford, 1997), 192–95. Tchalenko (*Villages antiques de la Syrie du Nord* [n. 28 above], 1:231) estimates that construction began early in the reign of Zeno, around 476, following the insurrection of Basiliskos. He argues that since the Syriac *Life* makes no mention

included leveling large sections of the mountain on which Symeon's column stood and constructing a cruciform basilica around the column as well as a baptistery. Over the next century the complex expanded to boast a monastery and an additional church adjoining the baptistery. The path between the village of Telanissos and the cult complex was crowded with shops, a bathing complex, and a reception building.<sup>144</sup> This building project commenced either immediately before or on the heels of the composition of the Vatican manuscript in 473. The authors make no direct reference to the project, because of an intentional omission or because the project simply did not launch until after they had finished their text. In contrast, B<sub>2</sub> postdates the first phase of construction. Thus it is possible that the scribe was familiar with the spatial organization of the newly expanded pilgrimage complex.

As Jean-Pierre Sodini has shown, the architecture of the monumental pilgrimage complex constructed a spatial hierarchy for pilgrims. They began their visit to the cult site by ascending up the sacred way, which led from Telanissos to the entrance of the cult site. Pilgrims

then passed through the forecourt and into the south arm of the cruciform basilica. Inside, they at last viewed the column, located in an octagonal martyrium at the center of the basilica's four arms (fig. 4). Arches framed the pilgrims' northward path from Telanissos to the column. These arches marked the sacred way, entrance to the cult site, monumental door of the cruciform basilica, and eight sides of the octagonal martyrium. Each arch signaled the pilgrims' movement away from the mundane world, invited them into spaces of increased holiness, and previewed the veneration of the column.<sup>145</sup>

The pilgrim's progression through the cult site aligns with the chronological and causal structure of B<sub>2</sub>. Both the renovated pilgrimage complex and the new order of B<sub>2</sub> fashion the pilgrim's linear journey as defined by increasingly intense prayer experiences and culminating in a vision of Symeon's column. Furthermore, one of the seven newly added miracles in B<sub>2</sub> hints at an even closer association between the spatial organization of the new complex and the text. Garitte provides the following Latin translation:

*Illis temporibus plagis variis arrepti sunt homines t'alanšenses et peribant; congregati sunt et rogabant sanctum ut rogaret Deum pro eis; et ut prolongavit orationem pro eis, erat calix unus lapidis stans in fenestra communionis, et totus populus erat stans; repletus est calix aqua per se ipsum et redundavit in terram ex omni parte; et acceperunt omnes homines ex aqua, et unxerunt ea corpora sua, et confestim sanati sunt a plaga sua.*<sup>146</sup>

At that time, people from Tell-Neššē were struck with various pestilences and died. They assembled and petitioned the saint that he intercede on their behalf to God. When Symeon offered a prayer before them, there was a stone cup standing in the Eucharistic niche and all the people were standing. The cup filled with water spontaneously and overflowed on all sides onto the earth. All the men took from

of the new complex in 473, construction must have begun after the composition of the Syriac *Life* and therefore ought to be attributed to Zeno, whose reign began in 474.

144 The cult site (modern Qal'at Sim'an) and the village of Telanissos (modern Dayr Sim'an) were the subject of substantial archaeological investigation for much of the twentieth century and the first decades of the twenty-first century. Major early publications include D. Krencker and R. Naumann, *Die Wallfahrtskirche des Simeon Stylites in Kal'at Sim'an: I, Bericht über Untersuchungen und Grabungen im Frühjahr 1938, ausgeführt im Auftrag des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts* (Berlin, 1939), and Tchalenko, *Villages antiques de la Syrie du Nord*, 1:205–76. Between 1980 and 2006 Jean-Pierre Sodini directed excavations at Qal'at Sim'an (La mission archéologique française de Qal'at Sem'an); research focused on the cruciform martyrium and the baptistery. In 2007 Jean-Luc Biscop assumed the role of director of excavations, but owing to political instability in Syria excavations have ceased. The new mission enlarged the area of study to include the village of Telanissos (Dayr Sim'an). The team excavated the baths and sections of the boutiques along the sacred way and adjoining the triumphal arch. They also investigated the monastery at the cult site and the northwest monastery in Telanissos among other structures. The bibliography is too extensive to provide here; for an up-to-date overview of the structures at the cult site and some of the recent archaeological work, see J.-P. Sodini and J.-L. Biscop, "Qal'at Sem'an et Deir Sem'an: Naissance et développement d'un lieu de pèlerinage durant l'Antiquité tardive," in *Architecture paléochrétienne*, ed. J.-M. Spieser (Gollion, 2011), 11–59. The site has sustained substantial damage throughout the course of the Syrian Civil War, including airstrikes in May 2016.

145 J.-P. Sodini, "La hiérarchisation des espaces à Qal'at Sem'an," in *Le sacré et son inscription dans l'espace à Byzance et en Occident: Études comparées*, ed. M. Kaplan (Paris, 2001), 253–55. See also the discussion in A. M. Yasin, *Saints and Church Spaces in the Late Antique Mediterranean: Architecture, Cult, and Community* (Cambridge, 2009), 170–71.

146 Gar., 20.32–21.3.





Fig. 4. Symeon's column at Qal'at Sim'ān, looking toward the east arm and apse of the cruciform basilica. Photo by author.







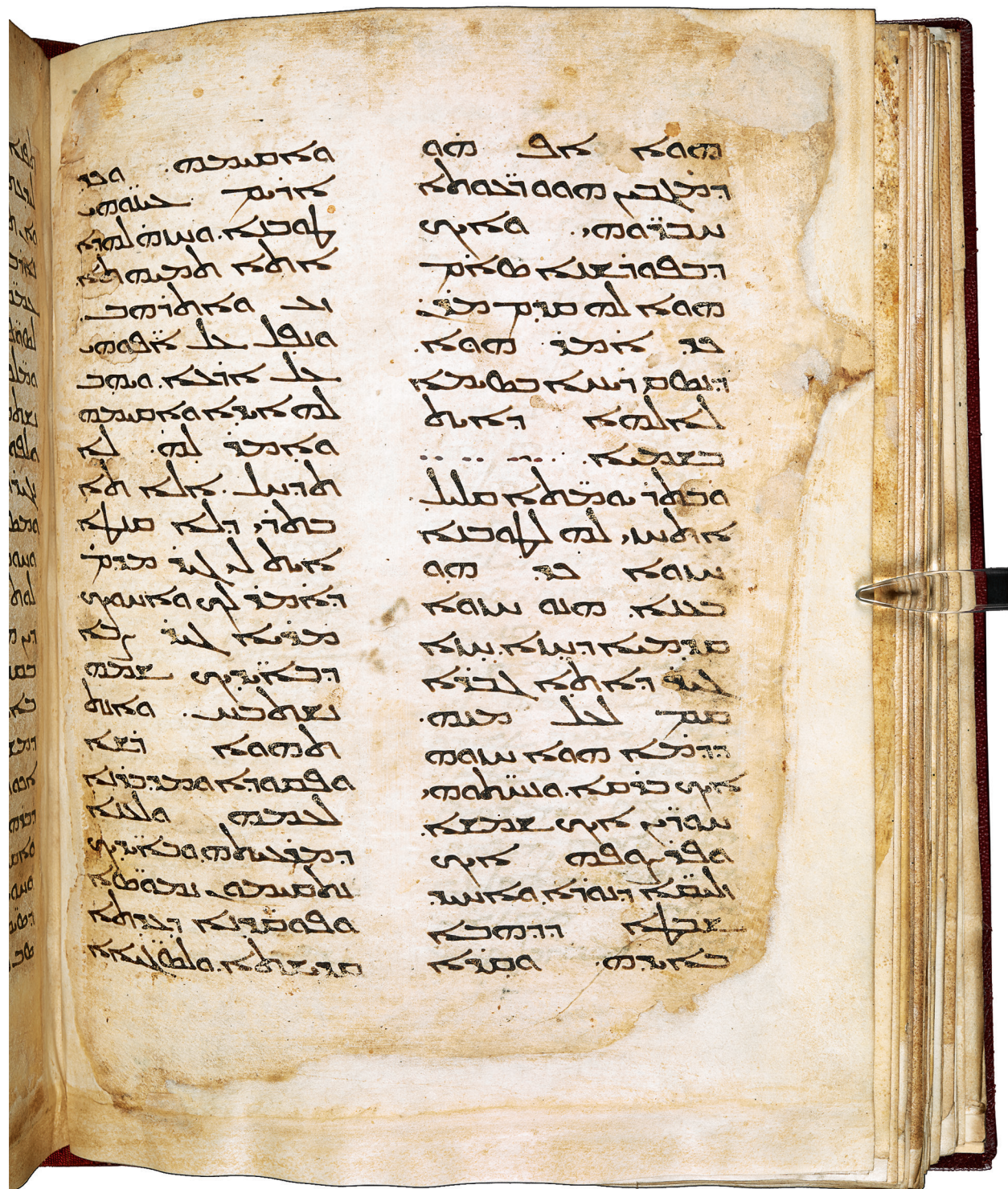


Fig. 5. British Library Add. 14484, fol. 49v. © British Library Board. Reproduced with permission of the British Library.



copying the text.<sup>154</sup> A close analysis of V, B<sub>2</sub>, and B<sub>1</sub> shows that the scribe responsible for the text of B<sub>1</sub> collated versions of V and B<sub>2</sub> to create a third version of the *Life*.<sup>155</sup>

The previous sections associated V and B<sub>2</sub> with the local community and with pilgrims to Telanissos, respectively, a judgment made from the contents of the manuscripts and guided by anthropological comparisons with the cult of Padre Cícero Romão Batista. B<sub>1</sub> contains fewer hints than V and B<sub>2</sub> regarding the context of its production, because many literary elements of V and B<sub>2</sub> are reproduced in B<sub>1</sub>. Nevertheless, drawing on those changes which do exist in B<sub>1</sub>, together with the broader context of sixth-century devotion to stylites and Syriac manuscript production, I argue that B<sub>1</sub> offers insight into a third cult community: that is, monks. The scribe crafted a version of the text closely linked to the rise of monastic devotion to Symeon. He appeals to a monastic audience, representing Symeon as a monastic father and counting monks among the beneficiaries of Symeon's miracles. Based in a monastic intellectual context, he builds on the work of previous scribes to construct a master narrative of Symeon's life.

154 The first folio (fol. 48) may not be original to the manuscript. Differences in the size of the folio, hand, and number of lines per column suggest that a later scribe copied this folio, probably in the course of repairing the manuscript. Further paleographic study is necessary to identify the date of the hand.

155 Comparison of the three manuscripts shows that B<sub>1</sub> reproduces words and passages from V not preserved in B<sub>2</sub>. Similarly, B<sub>2</sub> includes words and passages from V not preserved in B<sub>1</sub>. This suggests that the text of either B<sub>1</sub> or B<sub>2</sub> was a collation of two earlier versions. In previous scholarship ("Symeon and the Making of the Stylite" [n. 12 above]), I concluded that B<sub>2</sub> presents a shortened and simplified version of the text of V, which omitted redundancies and clarified problematic passages. B<sub>1</sub> retains and expands the language and contents of B<sub>2</sub> but also pays attention to the text of V, often inserting lines and full passages from V into B<sub>1</sub>. Specifically, "This conclusion is based on the premise that it would be easier to integrate and expand two texts, as the text of B<sub>1</sub> does, rather than condense two texts while retaining the order of one but selecting vocabulary from both texts." In addition, "The text of B<sub>1</sub> is a carefully composed text, as many previous commentators have noticed. This scribe who first composed this version of the text made precise decisions about word choice, word order, and the narrative organization of the text. It is easy to imagine such a scribe making reference to and selecting between the texts of two different manuscripts" (161).

### *Symeon as Monastic Father*

Until this point, we have not considered the involvement of monks in Symeon's cult. Symeon bar Eupolemos and Bar Ḥaṭar place great emphasis on Symeon's community of disciples, as discussed in the first section of this article. The authors consistently use the terms "his disciples" (ܬܕܝܨܬܐܝܬܐ), "those who served him" (ܬܠ ܕܩܪܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܠܐ), and occasionally "attendant" (ܬܬܝܬܐ).<sup>156</sup> In selecting these terms over ܬܠܝܐ (monk), ܬܠܝܬܐ (brother), and ܬܠܝܬܐ (penitent, mourner), the authors avoid several important terms in the Syriac vocabulary of monasticism.<sup>157</sup> Indeed, there is no indication that Symeon's disciples, as portrayed in V, were ascetic, and many seem not to have lived with the community permanently.<sup>158</sup> Recent research on early monasticism challenges scholars to look past binary oppositions such as eremitic versus cenobitic, desert versus city, and monk versus lay. It emphasizes the need to investigate the varied landscape of early monasticism. Claudia Rapp points to the importance of organized groups of pious laypeople within this landscape.<sup>159</sup> In my estimation, the community of

156 For the sake of brevity, I here include only one reference to each term, although they occur repeatedly throughout the text. ܬܕܝܨܬܐܝܬܐ (his disciples): V, fol. 5v, col. 2, ln. 21; As., 274.37; Doran, 108. ܬܠ ܕܩܪܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܠܐ (those who served him): V, fol. 18v, col. 1, lns. 4–5; As., 297.32–33; Doran, 125. ܬܬܝܬܐ (attendant): V, fol. 31v, col. 1, ln. 21; As., 316.34; Doran, 139.

157 In addition, the authors never speak of Symeon as an abbot (ܬܠܝܬܐ ܕܥܠܐ), nor is the enclosure called a monastery (ܬܠܝܬܐ). But they do use these terms when discussing the Teleda monastery, thereby making an even clearer distinction between the community of disciples and organized monasticism. Also, in V's account of Symeon's vision of Elijah, Elijah instructs Symeon to be concerned for the crippled, the poor, the priests, the priesthood, the laws of the church, and "your brother monks" (ܬܠܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܠܐ), among other groups. This reference to monks places Symeon in hierarchical relationship over them; it does not necessarily indicate that monks made up a sizable portion of Symeon's devotees in the 470s or earlier. See V, fol. 20r, col. 1, ln. 15–fol. 20v, col. 1, ln. 25; As., 300.10–301.8; Doran, 127.

158 In a forthcoming publication, I discuss the organization of this community, including recruitment, membership, and the community's duties at the cult site.

159 Two helpful discussions of these binary oppositions as constructed in ancient sources are J. E. Goehring, *Ascetics, Society, and the Desert: Studies in Egyptian Monasticism* (Harrisburg, PA, 1999), and D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 2002). For ongoing research on this topic, see the work of Claudia Rapp and Columba Stewart. I thank Rapp for sharing with me a draft of her essay "Christian Piety in Late Antiquity: Contexts and



disciples as portrayed in V seems to display some form of organized lay piety rather than the observances of a cenobitic or semi-eremitic community.

There is good reason to take seriously V's differentiation between disciples and monks. Various sources on Symeon indicate that substantial tension existed between Symeon and monastic communities in the early and mid-fifth century. Theodoret's *History of the Monks of Syria*, the Syriac *Life of Symeon*, and Antonius's *Life of Symeon* all recount that Symeon failed in his attempt to participate in the routine of cenobitic monasticism and was consequently forced out of the Teleda monastery.<sup>160</sup> Furthermore, while each gives a different explanation for the meaning of the column, they all presume that stylitism was an individual rather than communal form of ascetic prayer. In addition, both Evagrius Scholastikos and John Diakrinomenos report that monks demanded that Symeon descend from his column.<sup>161</sup> Finally, V and B<sub>2</sub> altogether exclude monks from the ranks of Symeon's

supplicants. Many sought intercession from Symeon—villagers, priests, bishops, civic officials, governors, even emperors—but a monk never turned to Symeon for aid. The same exclusion is notable in Theodoret's life of Symeon in his *History of the Monks of Syria*.

Although monks paid little attention to Symeon for much of the fifth century, archaeological evidence dating to the turn of the sixth century and after testifies to the growth of monastic devotion to Symeon. Monks exhibited an increased presence at the cult site and involvement in pilgrimage. In Telanissos two monasteries were constructed or extensively remodeled at the end of the fifth century: the monastery located at the northwest edge of the village and a monastery adjoining the cruciform basilica at the cult site.<sup>162</sup> Two more monasteries were constructed on the southwest and southeast edges of the village in the sixth century.<sup>163</sup> In addition, a growing number of cenobitic monasteries across the Near East housed stylite columns in the sixth century, providing evidence that column standing was no longer viewed as an individualistic ascetic practice.<sup>164</sup>

Changes in the text of B<sub>1</sub> suggest that the scribe responsible for this version composed it for or within a monastic milieu, perhaps in Telanissos or another monastery with special devotion to stylites. The text's interpretation of Symeon shifts from solitary ascetic to monastic father. The first indication of this shift appears at the very start of the manuscript. Previous manuscripts give the heading ܒܝܫܡܝܐ ܕܡܪ ܫܡܥܘܢ, "The Heroic Acts of the Blessed Mar Symeon" (V), and ܒܝܫܡܝܐ ܕܡܪ ܫܡܥܘܢ, "The Heroic Acts of

Contestations," an earlier version of which she presented at a conference in honor of Brent Shaw, "Subjects of Empire: Political and Cultural Exchange in Imperial Rome," Princeton University, 12–13 May 2017. Her essay is forthcoming in a volume edited by Harriet Flower and AnneMarie Luijendijk.

160 Theodoret, *History of the Monks of Syria*, ch. 26.4–5; text in Canivet and Leroy-Molinghen, *Histoire des moines de Syrie* (n. 7 above), 2:164–69; translation in Price, *A History of the Monks of Syria* (n. 7 above), 161–62. Antonius, *Life of Symeon*, chs. 4–10; text in Lietzmann and Hilgenfeld, *Das Leben des heiligen Symeon Stylites* (n. 4 above), 22.15–32.22; translation in Doran, 88–91. For the Syriac *Life of Symeon*, see V, fol. 7v, col. 1, ln. 7–fol. 11v, col. 1, ln. 10; As., 277.26–285.15; Doran, 111–17.

161 Evagrius Scholastikos in his *Ecclesiastical History* (bk. 1.13) records that one of the desert fathers came to Symeon on behalf of his community and demanded that Symeon explain why he had abandoned the path well-trodden by previous saints: text in A. Hübner, J. Bidez, and L. Parmentier, *Historia Ecclesiastica = Kirchengeschichte*, 2 vols., Fontes Christiani 57 (Turnhout, 2007), 1:158–60; translation in M. Whitby, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus*, Translated Texts for Historians 33 (Liverpool, 2000), 35. According to the *Epitome* of John Diakrinomenos's lost *Ecclesiastical History* (bk. 5), monks from Egypt found fault with Symeon's column standing and refused to be in communion with him: text in Hansen, *Theodoros Anagnostes Kirchengeschichte* (n. 60 above), 153–54, frags. 534–37; translation in Price, *A History of the Monks of Syria*, 174n16. In addition, monks in the *Life of Daniel the Stylite* (ch. 7) questioned Symeon's legitimacy and contended that Symeon's column standing was only a vainglorious proceeding: text in Delehaye, *Les saints stylites* (n. 60 above), 7–8; translation in Dawes and Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints* (n. 60 above), 10.

162 Northwest monastery: J. Azpeitia and A. Desreumaux, "Deir Sim'ân, monastère nord-ouest: Présentation de l'église," *TM* 15 (2005): 37–66; J.-L. Biscop, "Réorganisation du monachisme syrien autour du sanctuaire de Saint-Syméon," in *Les églises en monde syriaques*, ed. F. Briquel-Chatonnet (Paris, 2013), 145–51. Monastery at the cult site: Biscop, "Réorganisation du monachisme syrien," 139–44; Biscop, "Le sanctuaire et le village des pèlerins" (n. 73 above), 1424–31. Air strikes conducted in May 2016 resulted in significant damage to the monastery at the cult site.

163 Southwest monastery: Biscop, "Réorganisation du monachisme syrien," 151–58, and "Le sanctuaire et le village des pèlerins," 1438–42. Southeast monastery: Biscop, "Réorganisation du monachisme syrien," 158–61, and "Le sanctuaire et le village des pèlerins," 1435–38.

164 Peña, Castellana, and Fernández, *Les stylites syriens* (n. 133 above), 79–159; Schachner, "The Archaeology of the Stylite" (n. 55 above), 329–97.

Mar Symeon" (B<sub>2</sub>).<sup>165</sup> B<sub>1</sub> retains the heading ܡܝܨܝܡܐ ܕܡܪ ܫܡܥܘܢ, "The Heroic Acts of Mar Symeon," on several folios within the manuscript.<sup>166</sup> However, the heading on the first folio (48v) of B<sub>1</sub> reads ܡܝܨܝܡܐ ܕܡܪ ܫܡܥܘܢ ܕܥܝܢ ܕܡܡܬܐ, "The Heroic Acts of Mar Symeon: Head of the Mourners." This folio may not be original to the manuscript, given the differences in the size of the folio, scribal hand, and number of lines per column. Presumably, a later scribe copied this folio in the course of repairing the manuscript, and it is impossible to know if he did so precisely or took liberties in adapting the text's contents. Nevertheless, the new title, "Head of the Mourners," is compelling. All three versions praise Symeon's ascetic victory, a long-standing motif in Greek and Syriac hagiography, but by adding "Head of the Mourners," the scribe (whether the scribe of B<sub>1</sub> or the later scribe) layered monastic authority onto Symeon's vocation.

The term ܡܡܬܐ, "mourner," carries a history intertwined with the transition in the Syriac tradition from individual ascetic practice to institutionalized monasticism. It belongs to the vocabulary of early Syriac asceticism, alongside the terms ܡܝܨܝܡܐ, "solitary" or "single one," and ܡܡܬܐ ܕܡܡܬܐ and ܡܡܬܐ ܕܡܡܬܐ, the "sons of the covenant" and "daughters of the covenant." In the fourth century, these ascetics did not live in structured monastic communities like those then taking shape in Egypt but instead retreated alone into the wilderness or made their own arrangements in association with local ecclesiastical communities.<sup>167</sup> In the poetry of Ephrem

(d. 373), mournfulness characterized the internal character of the solitary. Sorrow for sin led ascetics to the desert in response to the beatitude "Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted."<sup>168</sup> In practice, the internal character of mournfulness manifested itself through external display: ascetics exhibited physical signs of sorrow, such as wearing long hair, chains, iron collars, and sackcloth, in order to atone for their own sins and share the pain of the sins of others.<sup>169</sup>

As cenobitic communities inspired by Egyptian monasticism spread throughout fifth- and sixth-century Syria, the terms "mourner" and "solitary" began to be used in cenobitic contexts to refer to monks.<sup>170</sup> The fifth- or sixth-century Syriac translation of the *Life of Antony of Egypt* renders μοναχός variously as ܡܡܬܐ (solitary), ܡܡܬܐ (mourner), and ܡܡܬܐ (brother).<sup>171</sup> Antony is also called ܡܡܬܐ ܕܡܡܬܐ, "Head of the Mourners," in the fifth-century Syriac

*Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian*, Cistercian Studies Series 124 (Kalamazoo, MI, 1992), 131–41.

168 Matt. 5:4; Griffith, "Asceticism in the Church of Syria," 234. It is unclear whether Symeon saw himself as a mourner or was inspired by this approach to asceticism, since very few sources written by Symeon survive. According to Theodoret's *History of the Monks of Syria* (ch. 26.2), this particular beatitude inspired Symeon to pursue the ascetic life: text in Canivet and Leroy-Molinghen, *Histoire des moines de Syrie*, 2:162; translation in Price, *A History of the Monks of Syria*, 161. In contrast, Symeon is never called a mourner in either V or B<sub>2</sub>.

169 D. Caner, "From the Pillar to the Prison: Penitential Spectacles in Early Byzantine Monasticism," in *Ascetic Culture: Essays in Honor of Philip Rousseau*, ed. B. Leyerle and R. Darling Young (Notre Dame, IN, 2013), 128–30.

170 Griffith, "Asceticism in the Church of Syria," 238.

171 F. F. Takeda provides a chart of all renderings of the term μοναχός in the various translations of the *Life of Antony*; see "Monastic Theology of the Syriac Version of the *Life of Antony*," *StP* 35 (2001): 154–55. R. Draguet published a critical edition, translation, and commentary of the Syriac version in *La vie primitive de S. Antoine conservée en syriaque*, 2 vols., CSCO 417–18, Syr. 183–84 (Louvain, 1980). It is certain that the *Life* was translated into Syriac by 587, since British Library Add. 14609, fols. 19r–44r, which contains the short version of the *Life*, dates to that year. A second 6th-century manuscript also preserves a longer version of Antony's *Life* in Syriac: British Library Add. 14646, fols. 1v–80v (Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum* [n. 2 above], 3:1086–90). On the various recensions and their relationship with the Greek *Life*, see Draguet, *La vie primitive de S. Antoine*, 2:13\*–112\*, and D. Brakke, "The Greek and Syriac Versions of the *Life of Antony*," *Le Muséon* 107.1–2 (1994): 29–53. Although the two differ regarding the relationship between the Greek and Syriac texts, they agree on the approximate date of the Syriac translation, with

165 V employs ܡܡܬܐ ܕܡܡܬܐ at the top of fols. 28v, 31v, 33v, 40r, 43v, 46v, 50v, 53v, 57v, 60v, 64v, 68v, 70v, 72v, and 75v. It also uses the running titles ܡܡܬܐ ܕܡܡܬܐ at fol. 22v and simply ܡܡܬܐ at fols. 7v, 10v, and 37v. B<sub>2</sub> employs ܡܡܬܐ ܕܡܡܬܐ at the top of fols. 138v, 142v, 146v, and 151v. I judge these headings to be written in the same hand as the body of the text, not to have been added by a later scribe.

166 B<sub>1</sub> reads ܡܡܬܐ ܕܡܡܬܐ at fols. 50v, 55v, 89v, and 93v and ܡܡܬܐ ܕܡܡܬܐ (The Heroic Acts of Mar Symeon) at fols. 59v, 63v, 67v, 72v, 75v, 79v, 82v, 85v, 97v, 101v, 105v, 109v, 113v, 117v, 121v, and 125v.

167 In the fourth and early fifth centuries, the terms ܡܡܬܐ, "mourner," and ܡܡܬܐ, "single one," are more closely associated with solitary ascetic practice, whereas ܡܡܬܐ ܕܡܡܬܐ and ܡܡܬܐ ܕܡܡܬܐ, the "sons of the covenant" and "daughters of the covenant," are linked with church communities. For an introduction to this terminology, see S. H. Griffith, "Asceticism in the Church of Syria: The Hermeneutics of Early Syrian Monasticism," in *Asceticism*, ed. V. L. Wimbush and R. Valantasis (New York, 1995), 220–45, and S. P. Brock, *The*







chance that the scribe may have been based in a monastery in Tolanissos and thus interested in the individuals associated with the everyday life of the cult site, as were the authors of V. It is more likely, however, that the scribe demonstrated an interest in historical detail not for the sake of preserving local memory but rather because such details are valuable in crafting a literary narrative of a saint. By reincorporating these details, the scribe constructs a historical personage whose saintly powers enabled him to influence the politics and economy of his own time.

Although the scribe responsible for B<sub>1</sub> integrates many of the details found in V into his version of the text, he omits any mention of Bar Ḥaṭar and Symeon bar Eupolemos, effectively making his version of the Syriac *Life* anonymous. In late antiquity, countless saints' lives circulated anonymously with great success. In the case of the Syriac *Life*, the omission of authorship points to a transformation in the text's rhetorical position. Firsthand accounts were no longer necessary to authenticate the validity of the story, because Symeon's fame was far-reaching by the sixth century and his spiritual authority was no longer controversial. Accordingly, the scribe responsible for the version preserved in B<sub>1</sub> followed the text of B<sub>2</sub> in removing first-person plural references within the text.<sup>187</sup> The scribe judged that his version of the Syriac *Life* offered an authoritative narrative of the saint's life, regardless of authorial attribution. He crafted his version of the text from a position of confidence that his material would be well received by multiple constituencies in Symeon's cult.

The changes in B<sub>1</sub> are the work of a scribe who carefully collated versions of both V and B<sub>2</sub> to produce a highly refined narrative.<sup>188</sup> The attention to detail required in such a task indicates both a high level of scribal training and participation in an intellectual community that valued such texts. Syrian monastic culture certainly provided such an environment.<sup>189</sup>

187 See note 49.

188 See note 155.

189 Across the eastern Mediterranean world, monasteries were centers of book production in late antiquity; see C. Rapp, "Christians and Their Manuscripts in the Greek East in the Fourth Century," in *Scrittura, libri e testi nelle aree provinciali di Bisanzio: Atti del seminario di Erice (18–25 Settembre 1988)*, ed. G. Cavallo, G. de Gregorio, and M. Maniacci (Spoleto, 1991), 133–44. Papyrological evidence from Egypt indicates that monks were involved in all stages of book production: copying, illustrating, and binding; see C. Kotsifou, "Books

Marlia Mundell Mango tallies forty signed and dated late antique Syriac manuscripts associated with monasteries, most of which were produced around Antioch and Edessa. Of these, eleven were copied in monasteries, nineteen were bought elsewhere (and thus possibly copied in nonmonastic contexts), and the remaining ten do not specify where the manuscript was copied.<sup>190</sup> Monasteries possessed religious literature originally written in Syriac and translated from Greek into Syriac, in genres including homilies, monastic discourses, and letters. They also housed Syriac translations of Greek secular literature—for example, treatises on moral content by Lucian, Plutarch, and Themistios.<sup>191</sup> A scribe working in such a milieu could have had access to Syriac hagiographies, such as the *Life of Barsauma*, the Syriac translation of the *Life of Antony*, or select Persian Martyr Acts.<sup>192</sup> Exposure to such texts would have shaped the scribe's literary acumen, in particular his expectations for what a polished hagiography might look like.

In summary, B<sub>1</sub> preserves a meticulously crafted narrative of Symeon's life. Like B<sub>2</sub>, the order employs a chronological and causal arrangement to correlate the intensification of Symeon's ascetic and visionary experiences with the heightening of his miraculous abilities. By reintegrating details from V, the scribe constructs a historical personage capable of influencing both local

and Book Production in the Monastic Communities of Byzantine Egypt," in *The Early Christian Book*, ed. W. E. Klingshirn and L. Safran (Washington, DC, 2007), 50.

190 Mango, "Patrons and Scribes Indicated in Syriac Manuscripts" (n. 16 above), 5.

191 A. Rigolio, "Some Syriac Monastic Encounters with Greek Literature," in *Syriac Encounters: Papers from the Sixth North American Syriac Symposium, Duke University, 26–29 June 2011*, ed. M. Doerfler, E. Fiano, and K. Smith (Leuven, 2015), 295–304.

192 The *Life of Barsauma* dates to the sixth century: for the Syriac version, see F. Nau, "Résumé de monographies syriaques," *ROC* 18 (1913): 270–76, 379–89; 19 (1914): 113–34, 278–89; for the Ethiopic version, see S. Grébaut, "Vie de Barsoma le Syrien," *ROC* 13 (1908): 337–45; 14 (1909): 135–42, 264–75, 401–16. For the Syriac translation of the *Life of Antony*, see Draguet, *La vie primitive de S. Antoine* (n. 171 above). The Persian Martyr Acts are difficult to date and only select Acts date to the fourth, fifth, and early sixth centuries. One of the strongest criteria for dating individual Acts is the date of the earliest manuscript(s) in which they are preserved. For a brief overview of the surviving Persian Martyr Acts, manuscripts that record each Act, and editions of texts, see S. P. Brock, *The History of the Holy Mar Ma'in with a Guide to the Persian Martyr Acts*, Persian Martyr Acts in Syriac: Text and Translation 1 (Piscataway, NJ, 2008), 77–91.





The three late antique manuscripts of the Syriac *Life* illustrate the complex formation of a hagiographical tradition in late antiquity. The creation and subsequent revisions of the text offer the opportunity to take part in a multigenerational conversation about Symeon. This conversation reproduced some earlier notions of sanctity, occluded others, and generated new conceptions of him. Revision functioned as ongoing commentary on his power and presence. But this act was not neutral: it constantly repositioned the boundaries of

Symeon's sanctity in dialogue with the needs of specific cult constituencies. These manuscripts elucidate the discursive nature of the representation of a saint within a single textual tradition.

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## Appendix

Table 1. Order of V

V	(continued) V
Chs. 1–27:* Symeon's early life, first vision, first miracles in Sisa, entry into and expulsion from Teleda monastery, and entry into Telanissos	Chs. 65–66: Praise
Chs. 28–32: Mentoring by itinerant inspector Mar Bas; Symeon's seclusion and battles with demons	Chs. 67–73: Miracles: in camp of <i>ṭayyāyē</i> , Persia, and ships at sea
Chs. 33–36: Miracles: healing of supplicants from Bayt Lāhā, plain of Antioch, and other local communities	Chs. 74–76: Miracle: Symeon ends drought in Telanissos
Ch. 37: Praise	Chs. 77–78: Praise
Chs. 38–39: Miracles: healing of priest from the north; protection of man from Aleppo's field	Chs. 79–88: Miracles: healing and protection of supplicants from Sheba, Persia, Armenia, Samosata, Dalok (unidentified place or perhaps Dolichē), Germanikeia (Mar'aš in Syriac), the Black Mountain
Chs. 40–43: Visions of Moses and Elijah	Chs. 89–92: Miracles: healing of man from Aleppo, youth living 3 miles from cult site, and youth from low-lying country; punishment of deacon from Telanissos
Ch. 44: Ascetic practices	Chs. 93–101: Mentoring by itinerant inspector Mar Bas; Symeon's seclusion and battles with demons
Chs. 45–47: Praise	Chs. 102–6: Symeon ascends first column; death of brother Shemshi
Chs. 48–55: Decay and healing of Symeon's foot	Chs. 107–13: Symeon's ascent to taller columns; defense of column
Chs. 56–60: Miracles: political interventions on behalf of dye workers and youth who wished to avoid service on civic council; punishment of corrupt politicians	Chs. 114–20: Death
Chs. 61–64: Miracles: defense of towns from animal infestation and drought	Chs. 121–23: Symeon's letter to the emperor
	Chs. 124–29: Symeon's funeral procession and burial in Antioch

Chapter enumeration from Doran, *The Lives of Simeon Stylites*.

Table 2. Comparison of organization of G and B<sub>2</sub> with V, in order of G and B<sub>2</sub>

G and B <sub>2</sub>	V
G chs. 1–25; * B <sub>2</sub> fols. 134r–141v	Chs. 1–27: Symeon's early life, first vision, first miracles in Sisa, entry into and expulsion from Teleda monastery, and entry into Telanissos
G chs. 26–30; B <sub>2</sub> fols. 141v–142v	Chs. 28–32: Mentoring by itinerant inspector Mar Bas; Symeon's seclusion and battles with demons
G chs. 31–34; B <sub>2</sub> fols. 143r–144r	Chs. 33–36: Miracles: healing of supplicants from Bayt Lāhā, plain of Antioch, and other local communities
—†	Chs. 37: Praise
G chs. 35–38; B <sub>2</sub> fols. 144r–145r	Chs. 89–92: Miracles: healing of man from Aleppo, youth living 3 miles from cult site, and youth from low-lying country; punishment of deacon from Telanissos
G chs. 39–49; B <sub>2</sub> fols. 145r–146v	Chs. 93–101: Mentoring by itinerant inspector Mar Bas; Symeon's seclusion and battles with demons
G chs. 50–54	Chs. 102–6: Symeon ascends first column; death of brother Shemshi
—	Chs. 77–78: Praise
G chs. 55–61; B <sub>2</sub> fols. 147r–148r: Additional battles with Satan; seven new miracles	—
G chs. 62–71; B <sub>2</sub> fols. 148r–150v	Chs. 79–88: Miracles: healing and protection of supplicants from Sheba, Persia, Armenia, Samosata, Dalok (unidentified place or perhaps Dolichē), Germanikeia (Mar'aš in Syriac), the Black Mountain
G chs. 72–73	Chs. 38–39 Miracles: healing of priest from the north; protection of man from Aleppo's field



*(continued)*

G and B <sub>2</sub>	V
G chs. 74–77	Chs. 40–43: Visions of Moses and Elijah
G ch. 78	Ch. 44: Ascetic practices
—	Chs. 45–47: Praise
G chs. 79–85	Chs. 48–55: Decay and healing of Symeon's foot
G chs. 86–89	Chs. 56–60: Miracles: political interventions on behalf of dye workers and youth who wished to avoid service on civic council; punishment of corrupt politicians
G chs. 90–92	Chs. 61–64: Miracles: defense of towns from animal infestation and drought
—	Chs. 65–66: Praise
G chs. 93–98	Chs. 67–73: Miracles: in camp of <i>ṭayyāyē</i> , Persia, and ships at sea
G chs. 99–100; B <sub>2</sub> fols. 151r–151v	Chs. 74–76: Miracle: Symeon ends drought in Telanissos
G chs. 101–2; B <sub>2</sub> fol. 151v	Chs. 121–23: Symeon's letter to the emperor
G chs. 103–12	Chs. 107–13: Symeon's ascent to taller columns; defense of column
G chs. 113–18	Chs. 114–20: Death
G chs. 119–23	Chs. 124–29: Symeon's funeral procession and burial in Antioch

\* Chapter enumeration of G from Garitte, *Vies géorgiennes*, coordinated with surviving folios of B<sub>2</sub>.

† No corresponding text.

Table 3. Comparison of organization of B<sub>I</sub>, V, and G and B<sub>2</sub>, in order of B<sub>I</sub>

B <sub>I</sub>	V	G and B <sub>2</sub>
Fols. 48v–61v*	Chs. 1–27: Symeon's early life, first vision, first miracles in Sisa, entry into and expulsion from Teleda monastery, and entry into Telanissos	G chs. 1–25; B <sub>2</sub> fols. 134r–141v
Fols. 61v–63v	Chs. 28–32: Mentoring by itinerant inspector Mar Bas; Symeon's seclusion and battles with demons	G chs. 26–30; B <sub>2</sub> fols. 141v–142v
Fols. 63v–65r	Chs. 33–36: Miracles: healing of supplicants from Bayt Lāhā, plain of Antioch, and other local communities	G chs. 31–34; B <sub>2</sub> fols. 143r–144r
—†	Ch. 37: Praise	—
Fols. 65r–66v	Chs. 89–92 Miracles: healing of man from Aleppo, youth living 3 miles from cult site, and youth from low-lying country; punishment of deacon from Telanissos	G chs. 35–38; B <sub>2</sub> fols. 144r–145r
Fols. 66v–69v	Chs. 93–101: Mentoring by itinerant inspector Mar Bas; Symeon's seclusion and battles with demons	G chs. 39–49; B <sub>2</sub> fols. 145r–146v
Fols. 69v–72r	Chs. 102–6: Symeon ascends first column; death of brother Shemshi	G chs. 50–54
Fols. 72r–74r	Chs. 77–78: Praise	—
Fols. 74r–77v	—	G chs. 55–61; B <sub>2</sub> fols. 147r–148r: Additional battles with Satan; seven new miracles
Fols. 77v–84r	Chs. 79–88: Miracles: healing and protection of supplicants from Sheba, Persia, Armenia, Samosata, Dalok (unidentified place or perhaps Dolichē), Germanikeia (Mar'aš in Syriac), the Black Mountain	G chs. 62–71; B <sub>2</sub> fols. 148r–150v

*(continued)*

<b>B<sub>1</sub></b>	<b>V</b>	<b>G and B<sub>2</sub></b>
Fols. 84r–87r	Chs. 38–39 Miracles: healing of priest from the north; protection of man from Aleppo's field	G chs. 72–73
Fols. 87r–89r	Chs. 40–43: Visions of Moses and Elijah	G ch. 74–77
Fols. 89r–89v	Ch. 44: Ascetic practices	G ch. 78
Fols. 89v–91v	Chs. 45–47: Praise	—
Fols. 91v–94r	Chs. 48–55: Decay and healing of Symeon's foot	G chs. 79–85
Fols. 94r–98v	Chs. 56–60: Miracles: political interventions on behalf of dye workers and youth who wished to avoid service on civic council; punishment of corrupt politicians	G chs. 86–89
Fols. 98v–102v	Chs. 61–64: Miracles: defense of towns from animal infestation and drought	G chs. 90–92
Fols. 102v–104r	Chs. 65–66: Praise	—
Fols. 104r–111v	Chs. 67–73: Miracles: in camp of <i>ṭayyāyē</i> , Persia, and ships at sea	G chs. 93–98
Fols. 111v–114v	Chs. 74–76: Miracle: Symeon ends drought in Telanissos	G chs. 99–100; B <sub>2</sub> fols. 151r–151v
Fols. 114v–120v	Chs. 107–13: Symeon's ascent to taller columns; defense of column	G chs. 103–12
Fols. 120v–126r	Chs. 114–120: Death	G chs. 113–118
Fols. 126r–127r	Chs. 121–23: Symeon's letter to the emperor	G chs. 101–2; B <sub>2</sub> fol. 151v
Fols. 127r–130v	Chs. 124–29: Symeon's funeral procession and burial in Antioch	G chs. 119–23

\* Because B<sub>1</sub> lacks chapter enumeration in any edition or translation, I have provided folio numbers only.

† No corresponding text.



